

**K. Sello Duiker's Realism:  
Form, Critique, and Floating Kingdoms**

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*A minor-dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
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University of Cape Town

### **PLAGIARISM DECLARATION**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this minor-dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>1</sup> For the Rocklands Villas alleyway in Sea Point where – much like Azure only now in young adulthood – they slept and where we sat eating, smoking, and talking during the course of 2012, see: [https://www.google.com/maps/@-33.9096372,18.3937149,3a,75y,241.03h,79.4t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sbMEUJFn-pCAv7Z\\_7Khf15A!2e0!7i13312!8i6656](https://www.google.com/maps/@-33.9096372,18.3937149,3a,75y,241.03h,79.4t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sbMEUJFn-pCAv7Z_7Khf15A!2e0!7i13312!8i6656).

The bell rings, but you hear the sound before it rings. The mind that is aware of the bell before it rings is the Buddha-mind. If however you hear the bell and then say it is a bell, you are merely naming what's been born, a thing of minor importance.

- Bankei-Eitaku (1622-93)

## **Abstract**

Before drawing together composite elements from his works of novelistic art, as well as his life in writing, the intention of this thesis is to argue that Duiker's realism is an 'authentic' one. Furthermore, Duiker's 'commitment' as an authentic literary realist is to 'articulate' an oppositional world outlook that I am codifying as 'alter-native'. The alter-nativism is expressed not only by the 'interplay' of the 'lumpen' protagonists of the novels but by Duiker himself in the extra-generic marginalia to his short literary career. In order to give 'value' to the contention of this thesis as a whole I will utilize a number of theorists working critically with the relation between language and consciousness, and therefore, as I argue, the 'zero point' of social being.

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## **Introduction**

The constitution of this minor-dissertation is broadly threefold. The first chapter is concerned with Duiker's realist form, the second with extra-generic material and theoretical underpinnings which allow for a clearing of his ideological dispositions, and the third with language and its relation to consciousness in the social order. In all three domains of critical analysis the idea of relational substructure is paramount and the constitutive elements drawn together from these, subtend collectively, to the central line of argumentation which is an exposition of Duiker's unified world outlook.

Chapter One begins with the genesis from Plato of the prescriptive censuring of mimesis and verisimilitude in artistic productions and which is then adopted and reformulated by classicists in the modern period. The critical position adopted by Shaftesbury is used as a quintessential example of the attitude towards empiricist tendencies in artistic production. With the aid primarily of Michael McKeon I examine the reasons underlying Shaftesbury's censuring of art that purports to historical reality. Key in this is the classical idea of the 'universal' as a closer approximation of truth. By enlisting the aid of Ian Watt I thereafter examine the development of the idea of 'particularity' as a counterpoise to the position of "extreme skepticism" which was not, inevitably, to prevent the *Rise* of the novel and with it realism as a self-conscious method in art. Of note here is that I will pick up on Watt's identification of the 'kind' of life, and 'way' it is presented, in literary realism but, I depart ways with Watt in that I believe the 'kind' to be of equal value for an 'authentic' realism.

Following from this I examine the historical underpinnings of realism with an analysis of the conceptual changes that the sign 'realism' undergoes through its linguistic history. In doing this I utilize key propositions discerned by Raymond Williams to begin to develop a deeper understanding of the contemporary deployments of this – as Williams quite rightly remarks – "difficult word" (257). The movement of realism through its conflicting appropriations brings to relief a much needed clarification for thinking through the 'authentic' realist method. Opposed to this is the prejudice often levelled against realism in that it is understood to only be able to 'represent' reality which would then make it 'pseudo-realist'. A precise formulation for an 'authentic' literary realism is given by Georg Lukács as the novelists ability to "“to penetrate the laws governing objective reality and to uncover the deeper, hidden, mediated, not immediately perceptible network of relationships that go to make up society” (*Aesthetics* 38). Williams, as I will demonstrate, concurs with Lukács in this definition of

‘authentic’ realism and both have taken their cue from the original philosophical position. From this analysis we begin to gain insight into what ‘authentic’ literary realism is, what realism is actually able to do, and why it is, for our age, absolutely necessary.

A step backwards into the initial Marxist debates surrounding realism and modernism and which of the two is the real avant-garde, specifically between Ernst Bloch and Georg Lukács in the early twentieth century, brings highly significant theory to bear for a thoroughgoing analysis of ‘authentic’ realism as developed by Lukács. I keep, during our discussion here, one eye on our own historical moment and am at pains to ground the idea that aesthetics and politics are by no means discrete activities within the social totality. Lukács’s thought grounds our delineation of literary realism and opens out on to a radical conception of the capabilities of ‘typicality’ (or the ‘kind’ to use Watt’s idiom) in ‘authentic’ and exemplary realist works.

Taking my prompt from the ‘type’ we move from aesthetic form to ‘form of life’ as the individual experiences of Duiker’s protagonists are all within the unstable social category defined by Karl Marx as the ‘lumpenproletariat’. That is to say that the nebulous make-up of the ‘lumpenproletariat’ refers to individuals living, for whatever reason, on the margins and sometimes extreme margins of society. The reformulation of this ostensible class designation by Charles Murray as the “underclass” (233) pins a prejudice against this social ‘mass’ who are seen as an homogenous entity and I argue that it is necessary to activate the ‘particular’ just here, in order to see through the mystification clearly. Implicit to this argument is the need for ‘authentic’ literary realism and the ‘type’ so as to counterchallenge this ‘universalizing’ perspective. I will ask that because Marx’s ‘lumpenproletariat’ falls flat in Marxist theory and ‘underclass’ is just as a derogatory and relegatory a form of ‘sign’ – that we use rather the term ‘lumpen’ as a social classification. The term ‘lumpen’ will act as a linguistic holder for the prejudice levelled at the ‘particulars,’ the individuals, forced to the ‘abnormal’ margins of society.

We close this chapter with an exemplary scene from the end of *Thirteen Cents* that both coheres and extends the critical analysis of ‘authentic’ realism. By demonstrating that the prejudice continuously levelled against artistic realism, generally, as the mere copying and imitation, the verisimilitude and representations, of reality is not what ‘authentic’ realism is, and certainly not, only what it is capable of. I demonstrate that from the very first San rock paintings and the recent Copernican revolution of anthropological interpretations – over and against epistemological and methodological prejudice of this art at the dawn of mankind –



initiated by arch-archaeologist David Lewis-Williams, proves that artistic realism can actually be a powerful form for going beyond appearances and into essences.

The second chapter is, for the most part, a decomposition of Duiker's 'alter-nativist' point of view as it manifests itself from a scattering of extraneous material that may be considered as his extra-generic life in writing. What I mean by 'alter-nativist' will make itself abundantly clear in the chapter but it may be worth our while, to posit just here, that it is a way of "... knowing and sensing (feeling) that do[es] not conform to the epistemology and aesthesis of the zero point ... " (Mignolo 80). 'Alter-nativism' is also an 'occidentalism' which, like Edward Said's 'orientalism' only now as the return of the gaze, is a re-distribution, re-elaboration, and "above all" (Said 12) a new discourse that at its best looks to the centres of society, critically.

I begin the chapter by knotting a cultural icon, David Beckham's Mohawk fashion with the source of the mimicry in Martin Scorsese and script writer Paul Schrader's 1976 film *Taxi Driver*. This is not by any means the deviation from Duiker or the argument of the thesis on my behalf that it may at first seem to be. Beckham's Mohawk is actually directly related to a critique by Duiker of London cultural life written as part of an assignment for his Commonwealth Regional Prize that he received for his debut *Thirteen Cents*. It is the first of two assignments arranged by the Booktrust. The focus on Beckham's Mohawk and the film *Taxi Driver* will also broaden and give concrete example of the 'alter-nativist' and 'zero point' argument of the thesis and I will explain why this is, but only at the appropriate time, in the conclusion to the thesis.

The second assignment for the Booktrust is the more telling as it asks Duiker to elaborate on his stance towards the Commonwealth. In presenting his viewpoint we find that Duiker found it to be difficult to express his ideas openly and his criticisms are therefore veiled ones. The 'alter-nativist' gaze is nevertheless there and I try to make clear the criticisms put forward by Duiker by underlining his thought in relation to other detractors of postcolonial theory. They are, firstly, decolonial theorist Walter Mignolo's argument for 'pluriversalism,' which is to say a celebration of different cultures and value systems as opposed to the postcolonial (and postmodern) 'universalist' pretension to be liberatory. The second detractors that I will draw from are the post Marxist philosophers, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, whose argument is that because postcolonial theory claims 'universality' it therefore becomes what it is supposed to critique. Due to Duiker's 'alter-native' gaze as it presents itself in the Booktrust assignments I will have recourse to Edward Said's working through of his theory of

‘Orientalism’ which, I believe, is what underpins Walter Mignolo’s “zero point epistemology” (80). Walter Mignolo’s “zero point of epistemology” has, partially, to do with the following:

Every way of knowing and sensing (feeling) that do not conform to the epistemology and aesthesis of the zero point are cast behind in time and/or in the order of myth, legend, folklore, local knowledge, and the like. Since the zero point is always in the present of time and the center of space, it hides its own local knowledge universally projected. Its imperialism consists precisely in hiding its locality, its geo-historical body location, and in assuming to be universal and thus managing the universality to which everyone has to submit. (80)

Drawing somewhat away from the ‘epistemological’ of Mignolo’s theorizing of the ‘zero point’ I will open the fundamental concerns of this concept up to other ‘articulations’. These are, namely, the ‘universalizing’ of the ‘zero point’ through contemporary language use, Duiker’s pronouncements in interviews, and as a closing to the chapter, a demonstration of the ‘zero point’ at work as we find it through a close reading of a minor but ‘typical lumpen’ character, Zebron, at the beginning of *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*. By the working through of these analyses my codification of ‘alter-nativism’ will have become a clearly formulated one.

Chapter Three, with its emphasis on language and consciousness opens with the central concerns of Ferdinand de Saussure’s semiology. The guiding principle, with the aid of the argument of Russell Daylight, is a denunciation of ‘representation’ and an activation in its stead of what Saussure understood as the importance of ‘articulation’. That is to say, the act of not only ‘representing’ meaning but making meaning. The correlation to ‘authentic’ realism should be obvious at this point in that ‘authentic’ realism does not merely ‘represent’ reality it ‘articulates’ it. Central to Saussure’s semiology, and which both Roland Barthes and Jacques Lacan will find axiomatic to their own theorizing, is the idea of ‘value’. No sign exists in an isolated universe but is rather an element in a language system, or to use Barthes’s important further development of semiology, in a system of signification. ‘Value’ is then determined by “what other signs surround it” [9]. For the argument concerning Duiker’s ‘alter-nativism’ as we find it in his extra-generic ‘life in writing’ and in his novels, the concept of ‘value’ becomes profound. It is at once a search for more, others, a community but also, a discourse with which to defend against the ‘universalizing’ of the ‘zero point’.

In order to give more substance to my argument I will turn to a closer examination of Barthes’s working with the concept of ‘value’ and the ‘naturalization’ processes of language.

I will attempt to take the idea yet further to theorizations of consciousness and offer, loosely I will admit, from various phenomenologists, the idea that the mind ‘carves out’ aspects of reality so as to manage it through division. I argue that language is the medium through which this ‘carving’ takes place but as an example I will give the experience and phenomenon of the rainbow, first brought to my attention by Kyle Takaki who in arguing for ‘enactive realism,’ concludes the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty to be ‘expressionist’.

I next turn, very importantly, to the psychoanalytic theory and practice of Jacques Lacan for a more developed theorization of the sign in order to make explicit the position, potential, and foreclosure of consciousness by language and the ability or inability for ‘articulation’. This is to say the ‘universalization’ of the ‘zero point’ and the ability for ‘alter-nativism’ to find coherence and formalization. At stake in this is “what structures the subject” (695) as Lacan states, and which we are terming, the ‘floating kingdom’.

To make concrete and moreover ‘articulate’ this theory I turn, strategically, to Frantz Fanon whose experience as a practicing psychiatrist and revolutionary polemicist makes abundantly clear the fact that ‘pathogenesis’ is a manifestation of colonial consciousness and deviations are a direct result of the subject not being able to find ‘articulation’ and ‘value’. Picking up on the re-conceptualization of Fanon’s ‘sociogeny’ as the ‘sociogenetic principle’ by Sylvia Wynter, I argue alongside Wynter that it is with a “new language” (N. pag.) – what I am arguing as ‘alter-nativist articulation’ – that consciousness may be recalibrated for a “new man (sic)”. The subject being able to self-reflect and self-determine are essential to this process and I believe we have this with Duiker’s ‘authentic’ realism. For this reason I turn once more to the opening of *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* with a focus on the ‘zero point’ and ‘alter-native’ experiences of the protagonist Tshepo. With a close reading of the ‘interplay’ of the characters Mmabatho and Tshepo I argue and demonstrate ‘articulation’ and ‘value’ in process. The effect is to show in Duiker’s ‘authentic’ literary realism the reaching for free consciousness despite the foreclosures of the ‘zero point’ of language. I end the chapter by tying together a distinct thread that I see at work between Fanon and Duiker concerning Fanon’s generative use of ‘wrench’ which is to say a ‘sign’ that Fanon uses twice while discussing a “genuine national culture” (119). Duiker turns the ‘sign’ into an actual road sign in the text, and what is more is that Duiker does this with what at first sight seems to be an editing mistake. After looking very closely at the scene in the *Quiet Violence* where this happens I must conclude that the mistake is purposeful on Duiker’s part and has been done to alert the reader as to what sends Tshepo on is ‘wrench’ journey in the text. To give further weight to this argument I have included a passage from *The Quiet Violence* as an addendum so as to show Duiker’s ‘alter-nativist’

critique of South African 'national culture' which Tshepo sees as being in no way 'genuine'. But this should come as no surprise if we know that Duiker's world outlook is a continuous looking through 'authentic' eyes for the potentialities for free consciousness and the 'new' humanity, the 'value,' that he so longed for.

My conclusion will focus on a specific 'zero point' sign quoted in many of the references within the thesis. In doing this I will demonstrate that some signs have become fixed in meaning, some are in contestation for meaning(s), while others are 'new' and can therefore become active and open to the play of the 'outside'. By doing this I will be able to argue as a conclusion that because there exists the possibility for the 're-structuring of the subject' through the 'alter-native' world outlook there is the possibility for Saussure, Barthes, and Lacan's 'floating kingdom' to reverse the 'zero point' of social being. There is then, for 'authentic' artistic realism, as the true avant-garde of our time, much work to still be done.

## **Chapter One: Form**

### **Towards an Authentic Literary Realism for Duiker**

The beginning already contains the end latent within itself. A genuine beginning, however, has nothing of the neophyte character of the primitive. The primitive, because it lacks the bestowing, grounding leap and head start, is always futureless. It is not capable of releasing anything more from itself because it contains nothing more than that in which it is caught.

- Martin Heidegger “The Origin of the Work of Art” (74)

### *Senses of Literary Realism*

To touch on ‘realism’ is in effect to embroil oneself, more than contemporary common sense judgements allow, in long and complicated conversations that are by no means isolated to the literary. The history of ideas and intellectual history, as can be demonstrated, is for the most part a censuring of artistic practices that try to specifically bring reality, by way of reproductions, into focus. This denouncing of the realist mode takes place long before the concept of “realism” is put forward in the arts in any self-conscious, self-critical, and self-determining way. Plato, for instance, in the *Republic* argues from the initial premise of the infectious problem of literary dramatic form (82) that at end (unless in the case of poetry a defence can be mounted) it would be necessary to ban from the ideal commonwealth all painters and poets engaging in the direct imitation, copying, or mimicry of things, actions, and beings as they appear to us in the world (321-40). For Plato’s Socrates this is to be thrice removed from reality; in creating a resemblance of something the artist does not create the thing itself which then means that it has less value, and what is more, both thing and artistic reproduction of thing do not attain the Form, which would be the “essential nature of the thing” (its general and universal property) making art “third in succession from the throne of truth” (327). Plato’s Ancient Greek term for the artistic activity of verisimilitude is “mimesis” and we understand this to mean the ‘imitation’ or more specifically today, the ‘representation’ of reality.

In the early eighteenth-century artistic criticism was one characterized by a tradition coming through from the renewed interest by Renaissance thinkers in the philosophy of classical antiquity and grounded primarily in Aristotle’s *Poetics*. The orthodoxy here prescribed itself to that same “classical preference for the general and universal” (Watt 16) which was understood to be a closer approximation to the truth. Lord Shaftesbury,<sup>2</sup> as one of the key philosophers of the period is quintessential of the late modern era’s distaste for the emerging critical and aesthetic interest and experimentation in ‘particularity’ that was coming to the fore at this time. Occupying the position of “extreme scepticism” (McKeon 118-28) Shaftesbury in his *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* anthology of 1711, was in this globalizing period to take a critical stance between that of “naïve empiricism” (McKeon 47-52) and the “capricious and fantastical” (Shaftesbury, *Sensus* 66). A telling description of

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<sup>2</sup> Anthony Ashley-Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury.

this attitude can be taken from his scorn for empirical fact and imaginative fancy (to the chagrin as well of the Royal Society of 1662)<sup>3</sup> to be found comingling within a work, and which was furthermore, for Shaftesbury, a corrupting influence of the European value systems and morals in much the same way as Plato found dramatic poetry to be infectious. During a lengthy diatribe against popular and leisurely interest in the “ridiculous” (romance and fiction) and the historical “tale-tellers” with their unhealthy interest in the “barbarous” over publications more agreeable to the ‘civilized’ (153-57), Shaftesbury states the following:

For facts unably related, though with the greatest sincerity and good faith, may prove the worst sort of deceit. And mere lies, judiciously composed, can teach us the truth of things beyond any other manner.<sup>4</sup> But to amuse ourselves with such authors as neither know how to lie nor tell truth discovers a taste which, methinks, one should not be apt to envy. (154)<sup>5</sup>

Shaftesbury’s disdain is one inherited by way of his wholesale subscription, as Michael McKeon in *The Origins of the English Novel* relates, to the “Aristotelian separation of history and poetry, the factual and the probable, the singular and the universal” and which McKeon argues “is a revolutionary doctrine of great antiquity that lay like a time bomb in the cultural unconscious of the West until its ‘discovery’ by Renaissance modernity” (119). McKeon notes that the “universal truth of poetry” which comes through from Aristotle is what actually underlies Shaftesbury’s “standard of truth” and by which he will “correct the empirical reliance on brute factuality”. The insistence on the dichotomy between life/imagination – particular/universal is pervasive in Shaftesbury’s thought. Ian Watt in *The Rise of the Novel* notes that “in his *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour* (1709), [he] expressed the distaste of this school of thought for particularity in literature and art very emphatically” (16). In Shaftesbury’s *Essay* it is stated, with regards a “painter, if he has any genius, understands the truth and unity of design and knows he is even then unnatural when he follows nature too close

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<sup>3</sup> See McKeon 100-105.

<sup>4</sup> The Editor in a footnote argues this to be an allusion to Aristotle’s *Poetics*: “The greatest of critics says of the greatest poet, when he extols him the highest, ‘that above all others Homer understood how to lie’” (154 fn. 92).

<sup>5</sup> In this charge against lie and truth, purely factual and purely fictitious coming together in a work, we have a signal for the “stylistic mingling” that Erich Auerbach in his *Mimesis* is able to make a figural/typological method for the differentiating between the “abstract/allegorical and the real/prophetic” (568-9) of literature, from Homer through to Virginia Woolf; all of which utilize verisimilar or mimetic elements in one way or another. The use of Auerbach’s “method of explication” (569) is slightly pre-emptive just here, but as we shall see, also important for our later analysis of participatory realism.

and strictly copies life” (66). In artistic practice “this effect the good poet and painter seek industriously to prevent” and moreover, rhetorically,

They hate minuteness and are afraid of singularity. . . . The mere face-painter indeed has little in common with the poet, but, like the mere historian, copies what he sees and minutely traces every feature and odd mark. . . . It is from the *many* objects of nature, and not from a *particular* one, that those geniuses form the idea of their work. (66-67)<sup>6</sup>

The crucial marker here has to do with the equation of artist to historian who “strictly copies life” and which becomes the central coordinate for Shaftesbury’s attack so as to delimit any historical account, “the worst sort of deceit” from its potential mixing with “mere lies”.

To understand Shaftesbury’s reasoning is to understand, as McKeon relates, that “as often as not, the Restoration reports the historicity of supernatural apparitions-accounts of witches or the devil, cases of divine deliverance and judgement[which]-are obliged by the very nature of their concern to relate the providential history of a *particular* individual” (90; my emphasis). Or, to put the point across with more clarity, they “tell the story of real human lives suffused with the otherworldly”. It is in the “formative seventeenth-century sub-genres” of “spiritual biography and autobiography, the picaresque, criminal biography, [and] the travel narrative” where this ‘unification’ of which we are concerned was to be made the most manifest but also from whose confrontations with historicity, empiricism, skepticism, and the spiritual that the “emergent novel begins to stabilize itself” (91). With the emergence of the novel come tacit doctrines of realism that “gathers up and sophisticates the scattered threads of verisimilitude and probability that Renaissance writers had teased out of the *Poetics*” (120).

McKeon’s is an incredibly well-wrought historical analysis of the material, cultural, and epistemic phenomena associated to the broad contextual “origins” of the English novel. It certainly brings more weight as to the early advances and development of realism than Ian Watt’s influential and ‘progressive’ 1957 study of the “rise” of the novel. But it is with Watt for his initial guiding principles and underlying assumptions that I would like us to linger momentarily specifically because of his attempt to elucidate the “lowest common denominator of the novel genre” only as “formal realism” (34).

To begin, Watt’s thesis is quite simply that there is a “relation between the growth of the reading public and the emergence of the novel in eighteenth-century England” (McKeon 1). He takes as elemental the fact that the novel’s history is primarily constituted, not by any

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<sup>6</sup> Emphasis is in the original unless otherwise stated.



“literary school,” but by Defoe, Richardson and Fielding, who in diverse ways as “beneficiaries” were the progenitors of the novel form “within a single generation,” and that this was most likely due to the “favourable conditions in the literary and social situation” (Watt 7-9). In order to differentiate the “break with old-fashioned romances” Watt takes his “working definition” from the “historians of the novel” who have seen in the emergent form the “defining characteristic” of “‘realism’” (9-10). ‘Realism’ then for Watt is seen as providing the touchstone in a ‘family resemblance’<sup>7</sup> that is as much a “rational abstraction” (McKeon 14-22), as it is a practical epistemological concern for French and English artists and writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries.

Accordingly, Watt following Bernard Weinberg (10), posits the main current of linguistic association with ‘realism’ in relation to the French school of Realists; where “*réalisme*” is “first used as an aesthetic description in 1835 to denote the ‘vérité humaine’ of Rembrandt as opposed to the ‘idéalité poétique’ of neo-classical painting,” with the “specifically literary term” coming into effect “by the foundation in 1856 of *Réalisme*, a journal edited by Duranty”. Watt registers the fact that “much critical and historical writing about the novel” is made opaque by the “bitter controversies” that surround the term at this stage of history. It is here that the realist / idealist antagonism is set in motion proper, according to Watt, with the “enemies” of the French Realists entrenching themselves “over the ‘low’ subjects and allegedly immoral tendencies of Flaubert and his successors”. Significantly, the French Realists as a school signify “the first sustained effort of the new genre to become critically aware of its aims and methods” and that in this, attention is drawn to the novel’s ability, as a form, to raise “the problem of the correspondence between the literary work and the reality which it imitates” (11).

In thus signalling a “prehistory” to formal realism Watt notes that the “‘realistic’” mode “has commonly been envisaged as a matter of tracing the continuity between all earlier fiction which portrayed low life,” and as he continues:

the story of the Ephesian matron is ‘realistic’ because it shows that sexual appetite is stronger than wifely sorrow; and the fabliau or the picaresque tale are ‘realistic’ because economic or carnal motives are given pride of place in their presentation of human behaviour. By the same implicit premise . . . the ‘realism’ of the novels of

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<sup>7</sup> Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations* (32e). I am using this notion by Wittgenstein as I believe it corresponds to the continuum and dis-continuum of ‘real’ in what Wittgenstein himself (in relation to his example of ‘game’) saw as “a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail”.

Defoe, Richardson and Fielding is closely associated with the fact that Moll Flanders is a thief, Pamela a hypocrite, and Tom Jones a fornicator. (10-11)

Watt takes this prejudicial and “particular literary perspective” as offering a simple inversion of romance, making it ‘realistic’ *only* because it “saw life from the seamy side” (11). Of vital importance here is the fact that for Watt this is an “obscuring [of] what is probably the most original feature of the novel form”; that is to say that “the novel’s realism does not reside in the *kind* of life it presents, but in the *way* it presents it” (my emphases). The prejudice of realism is hereby identified as the portrayal of “low life” with the fact that if it were only a form of “inverted romance” it still “surely attempts to portray all the varieties of human experience”. Moreover, he also relates the ‘way’ over ‘kind’ with the French Realists,

who asserted that if their novels tended to differ from the more flattering pictures of humanity presented by many established ethical, social, and literary codes, it was merely because they were the product of a more dispassionate and scientific scrutiny of life than had ever been attempted before.

The key element here is the French Realist assertion of a more objective and empirically based practice. An assertion that was to tint hermeneutics of realism for much of its history following from this.

Watt brings to his starting block a meaning of ‘realism’ that comes from the scholastic Realists as the “view of reality diametrically opposed to that of common usage” in that “it is universals, classes or abstractions, and not the particular, concrete objects of sense-perception, which are the true ‘realities’” (11). The differentiating move by Watt is to note that this “at first sight, appears unhelpful, since the novel, more than in any other genre, general truths exist *post res*” but also that it “at least serves to draw attention to a characteristic of the novel which is analogous to the changed philosophical meaning”; in other words that:

the novel arose in the modern period, a period whose general intellectual orientation was most decisively separated from its classical and mediaeval heritage by its rejection—or at least its attempted rejection—of universals. Modern realism, of course, begins from the position that truth can be discovered by the individual through his senses: it has its origins in Descartes and Locke, and received its first full formulation by Thomas Reid in the middle of the eighteenth century. (12)

My discussion necessitates that we part company with Watt now and the detailed correlation that he will generate between philosophic development and literary novelistic practice. The decisive problematic that I have attempted to highlight here is that up until this point in history realistic representations have been interpreted as leading away from, and distorting, the truth.

‘Realism’ as a self-conscious practice in the modern period begins to question the validity of that claim as Watt’s analysis shows. My own argument is that artistic realism has the ability to ‘articulate’ reality and thereby bring us into a closer approximation to truth. By this I mean that Duiker’s novels, as exemplary of the realist mode, offer an example of the dialectical movement from ‘universal’ imperatives to ‘particular’ ones. In what follows I will argue that the radical antithesis that we find in Duiker’s practice is that ‘universals’ are actually able to find actualization within each ‘particular,’ with the individual, the protagonist of each novel, bringing new and unique perspective and therefore, onceover, a closer approximation to truth for us. Before being able to demonstrate this in Duiker we need to clear more of the ground associated with the dynamics of the concept ‘realism’ because, as we shall see, it has become a highly contested sign, overlain with much confusion. To do this though we need turn elsewhere now for clarity.

### *Keyword Realism*

It is difficult but important to dissociate the word ‘realism’ from its English inheritance in the “philosophical school known as **Realist**”<sup>8</sup> who “were at a great distance from anything now indicated by the term” (Williams, *Keywords* 257). The Realist doctrine, as Raymond Williams explains, was “an assertion of the absolute and objective existence of universals, in the Platonic sense” and what is more; “these universal Forms or Ideas were held either to exist independently of the objects in which they were perceived, or to exist in such objects as their constituting properties”. Opposed to the Realist school in medieval thinking, were the Nominalists and as Williams points out, this philosophical school could in the terms of the late nineteenth century “be classed as **realists** of an extreme kind”. To make the matter even more complicated a third philosophical position known as Conceptualist<sup>9</sup> came into existence at the time of the inversion of the meaning of ‘realist’. Conceptualists in this early modern period sought a thoroughfare between the Realist and Nominalist positions by positing the existence of “abstract general ideas” which “are thus particular in their nature and general only in their signification, in the use the mind makes of them” (Youngren 709).<sup>10</sup> Remaining with the

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<sup>8</sup> Bolding and capitalizations belong to Williams.

<sup>9</sup> Watt makes no reference to ‘Conceptualism’.

<sup>10</sup> Youngren makes a persuasive argument that contrary to popular belief Locke was, as is shown in his *Essay* of 1690, very much concerned with this “third position” and that he “struggled hard to refine it” (706-737).

complex strictly surrounding realism Williams states that “it is very striking, and very confusing, that this [original] **Realist** doctrine is what we would now call extreme IDEALISM” (258).

Williams at this outset argues that the Realist school’s “use may be said to have faded” and that in the early nineteenth century “quite different senses of **realist**, and the new word **realism** in a more modern sense, can be said to have overlain and suppressed it”. Very perceptively Williams goes on to say:

But this is not wholly true. Our common distinction between *appearance* and **reality** goes back, fundamentally, to the early use – ‘the reality underlying appearances’ – and this has significantly affected many arguments about **realism**. **Real**, from the beginning, has had this shifting double sense . . . . A **Realist** in the pre-C18 sense of the word took **real** in the general sense of an underlying truth or quality; in the post-e[arly]C19 sense in the (often opposed) sense of *concrete* (as from C14 opposed to *abstract*) existence. (258)

For my own purposes it is imperative regarding the status of realism today in relation to its predecessor uses to keep the “underlying truth or quality” *and* “sense of concrete” together. Doing this will be a way of co-joining the perceived disjunction between the old and new uses of the term, and seems to be what Williams himself asks us to keep in mind.

That ‘Realism’ in Williams’s *Keywords* is given an inordinate amount of attention and a proliferation of “necessary connections” in the “field of meanings” (25) is telling of the extreme complexity of this “difficult word” (257). For the further sake of this argument I would like us to keep another specific sense of the word in mind. Namely, a “*commitment* to describing real events and showing things as they actually exist” (259; my emphasis). This would then be to aggregate the different senses explored by Williams whereby, for instance, ‘naturalism,’ ‘materialism,’ and ‘realistic’ find relation through the “sense of concrete” in order to perceive the “underlying truth or quality” (258).

The ‘commitment’ to the ‘particular’ as a means to attain to the “‘reality underlying appearances’” (258) is in fact to gain ground on the ‘way’ that Watt identified. The further development from this is that the ‘*kind*’ of life novelistic realism presents must, in fact, be held fast to, as this is what grounds the ‘particular’ in its social milieu and therefore opens our view to the potential truths underlying it.

For our contemporary moment this relates as well to the movement in “method and attitude” (259) – from imitation of reality – to a realism, as Williams states it, that is “a description of facing up to things as they **really** are, and not as we imagine or would like them

to be” (258-9). The quote that he uses to demonstrate this thought is from Ralph Waldo Emerson’s 1860 *The Conduct of life*: “let us replace sentimentalism by realism, and dare to uncover those simple and terrible laws which, be they seen or unseen, pervade and govern” (Emerson qtd. 259). The context of this statement by Emerson is one in which the argument is put forward that the “moral” and the “spiritual” despite the hour and the religiosity in and from which they are sprung, are “a lasting essence” despite, and that the “true meaning of *spiritual* is *real*” (Emerson 1062). This would then be a ‘conduct of life’ not only by what we see but also by the meanings of what underlies what is seen.

Williams will go on to demonstrate that the “to show things as they really are” is fraught with controversy with one of the repeating charges being that realism is actually an “evading of the **real**” (260). The argument stems mainly from “poetic creation” and the use of the imagination and abstractions where “*forms*” are seen as more able to approximate the Real, as with Plato, Aristotle, Shaftesbury and Romantic poetry. In terms of realism as method, or ‘way’, the charges have been that “what is described or represented is seen only superficially, in terms of outward *appearance* rather than its inner **reality**” and the same argument in a “modern form” that “there are many **real** forces - from inner feelings to underlying social and historical movements – which are either not accessible to ordinary observation or which are imperfectly or not at all represented in how things appear, so that a **realism** ‘of the surface’ can quite miss important **realities**”. These two forms of denunciation – appearance and surface – are easily enough done away with in that they are, according to Williams, said to be more accurate to naturalism. Specialized forms of realism such as “**psychological realism**” and “**socialist realism**” aim towards “hidden or underlying forces or movements, which simple ‘naturalistic’ observation could not pick up but which it is the whole purpose of realism to discover and express” (261). In this discovery and expression then, once more, there is for Williams “conscious commitment” where “**Reality** is here seen not as static *appearance* but as the movement of psychological or social or physical forces”.

Another objection levelled against realism is the ever-problematic idea of ‘representation’. Here, as Williams states “‘lifelike representation’, ‘the reproduction of reality’” (261) may through the medium have the objects mistaken for the real. As he points out this is an objection “directed primarily at **realistic** in the sense of *lifelike*”. By way of representation, through a specific medium, the “object is not **really** lifelike but by convention and repetition has been made to appear so”. As “harmful” a “pseudo-objective *version* of reality (a version that will be found to depend, finally, on a particular phase of history or on a particular set of relationships between men and between men and things) is passed off as **reality**. . . .“

Underlying this emphasis on representation, medium and convention in relation to realism as artistic method by Williams we can immediately see the existence of some serious questions concerning distortion, manipulation, appropriation, exclusion, habituation and in two words, ideology and hegemony.

Williams emphasizes the fact that what is “passed off as reality . . . what is there is what has been made, by the specific practices of writing and painting and film-making. To see it as **reality** or as the **faithful copying of reality** is to exclude this active element and in extreme cases to pass off a FICTION or a CONVENTION as **the real world**” (261). Williams will reiterate the fact that not only does realism *in art* have the “active element” of production by artists to it but that unlike naturalism, there is “that sense of a conscious commitment to understanding and describing real forces (a commitment that at its best includes understanding the processes of consciousness and composition that are involved in any such attempt)” (262). By this disaggregation the whole of realism does not simply come to be constituted in the prison house of representation simply because some ‘pseudo-objective’ elements are set to work for power. In point of fact, realizing that this is a ‘pseudo-realism’ and has been set to use in this way, I believe makes it all the more necessary that there is a setting into play of an ‘authentic’ realism of ‘articulation’ that is ideologically self-determining, self-conscious and productively critical of the very forces that aims to manage it. A double ‘commitment’ then, to reality as well as to an understanding of the productions of reality. Clearly, the ‘way’ of literary realism as a distinct domain of ‘articulation’ and secondary action does not only engage in the *representation* of reality, it actively helps to produce it.

### *Realism Before Our Time*

As an opening epigraph to his ‘Introduction’ in the 2010 *Concise Companion to Realism*, Matthew Beaumont, utilizes a quote by Bertolt Brecht as an adumbration of the “aesthetic debate” of the “great Marxist controversies over literature and art”<sup>11</sup> that took place in the mid-twentieth century. The quote is as follows:

Realism is an issue not only for literature: it is a major political, philosophical and practical issue that must be handled and explained as such – as a matter of general human interest. (Brecht qtd. Beaumont 1; Brecht 76)

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<sup>11</sup> Inside cover blurb to the 1980 Verso edition to *Aesthetics and Politics*.

Beaumont, with the same exasperation as Rachel Bowlby in her 'Foreword' to the *Companion*, reports a notable contemporary muteness with regards to literary realism since its polemical heyday in German pre-and-post World War II deliberations. The ostensible quiescence or seeming bloodied nose of "aesthetic debate" around literary realism<sup>12</sup> is equalled only by the increasingly clamorous and heterogeneous march from out of the land of Anglo-American orthodoxy. Beaumont, charges against the tradition as much as what he calls the "militant postmodernists" who, have "crudely caricatured realism" with an assumption of "a fundamentally unproblematic relationship between reality and its representations" (2). In the firing-line, amongst others, are Northrop Frye and Jean-François Lyotard.<sup>13</sup>

The *Companion* signals a re-emergence in our own time for the necessity of understanding in a deep and meaningful way the nature of the relations between aesthetics, politics, and artistic practice. In moving from realism as a distinct aesthetic to its associated politics and practice, it is hoped that the reader will begin to see that naïve interpretations, ungrounded prejudices, and the jettisoning of realism altogether from analyses are very much political questions in themselves.

As far as the "great Marxist controversies" that Beaumont picks up on are concerned it is Ernst Bloch who in "Discussing Expressionism" sets the stage in *Aesthetics and Politics* with a response to his friend and rival Georg Lukács. Lukács in a 1934 essay, "The Greatness and Decline of Expressionism," argued that although the "*conscious* tendencies of Expressionism were not Fascist" and that it "could only become a minor component of the Fascist 'synthesis'" it nevertheless was complicit (Lukács's word is 'collusion') in that "the Fascists were not without justification in discerning in Expressionism a heritage they could use" (Bloch and Lukács qtd. Bloch 17). Goebbels, a student of literature and history and later Minister of Propaganda for the Nazi Party, himself is said to have stated that in Expressionism were the "seeds of some sound ideas" as "the literary mode corresponding to fully-developed imperialism (!) . . ." (Lukács qtd. Bloch 17). Against Lukács's conceptual framework, Bloch argues that the radical phenomenon of this movement is entirely lost to the "pseudo-revolutionary" concept-based critique, and that this is, by way of the works of art themselves, to miss the art forms' real power. That is to say its subjectivist 'demolition' as opposed to Lukács's "closed, objectivist conception of reality" stemming from a "dialectical-materialist

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<sup>12</sup> Note the fact that in 1980 "translations of [Lukács's] most important theoretical essays of the thirties" (*Aesthetics and Politics* 60) had still to be published.

<sup>13</sup> See for instance Jean-François Lyotard *The Postmodern Explained: Correspondence 1982-1985* (Minneapolis and London: Minnesota Press, 1992), 1-16.

theory of reflection” (Bloch 22). Bloch asks the reader to consider if “authentic reality is [not] also discontinuity?”

In terms of the ‘way’ or, “creative method” (*Aesthetics* 11) of the productive capabilities of Expressionism Bloch will argue that it was a liberation from “schematic routines” and “academicism” concerned with the “values of art” and that it moves against “eternal ‘formal analyses’” by “direct[ing] attention to human beings and their substance, in their quest for the most authentic expression possible” (23). Defending Expressionists themselves against the indictment of decadence and estrangement “from ordinary people” Bloch points out that there was in actuality an engagement with “folk-art”; “the drawings of children and prisoners”; “works of the mentally sick”; “primitive art”; “Nordic decorative art” and that after all is said and done, and “For all the pleasure the Expressionists took in ‘barbaric art’, their ultimate goal was humane; their themes were almost exclusively human expression of the incognito, the mystery of man” (24). It must be said that the fact that there was an “engagement” with the artistic forms of all these social and historical categories elides the very point that Lukács makes concerning the aesthetic of realism in that the people, the actual producing subjects as ‘particular’ people, are missing in the ‘universal’ acts of creative appropriation by modernist works.

It would only be fair to note that Bloch does bring the question of the observer to bear on Expressionist works of art and states that if it “remains incomprehensible to the observer . . . this may indicate a failure to fulfil its intentions, but it may also mean that the observer possesses neither the intuitive grasp typical of people undeformed by education, nor the open-mindedness which is indispensable for the appreciation of new art” (26). In all of this, from criticism to use value, from practice through to consumption, one “overarching pattern” to borrow a term from McKeon, comes through. That is that Expressionism *represents* the forces of free consciousness as formal innovation, but only participates in the productions and with the producers of free consciousness as reality, in a discontinuous, minor, specialized and highly subjectivist way. To this extent Expressionism as a potentially emergent and oppositional cultural practice in Weimar Germany, to use Raymond Williams’s vocabulary, became merely a “corporate” ‘alternative’ to the reproductions of reality of a fascist and imperialist “dominant culture” (“Base” 37-40).

In his aptly titled “Realism in the Balance” Lukács was to give a coherent response to Bloch with a focus on the literary – a lacunae in Expressionist art (28) – as the most productive field of inquiry into the question of realism. Lukács, in this way, aimed to advance the importance of literary realism over and against “the development of specific literary trends”



such as Expressionism, associated with “modern art” (29). The stakes for ‘modern’ art, were for a critical understanding for Lukács of the necessity of literary realism as one of the essential “development[s] of literature” in the age, “particularly in capitalist society, and particularly at capitalism’s moment of crisis”. So why we ask ourselves is realism as an aesthetic in relation to capitalism and “literary trends” so important for Lukács? The answer on its deepest level relates to the “fundamental theoretical discussion” between Bloch and Lukács and which Lukács describes as the “coherent theoretical justification of the development of modern art” and which for him “goes right to the heart of the ideological issues at stake” (Lukács and Bloch qtd. Lukács 31). Bloch’s world-view as ‘discontinuous’ is irreconcilable to Lukács’s own conception of the ‘totality’ as the two come to be made manifest in the art of the time. Both essays thus register, theoretically, what would then go on to underpin in practice: the idea of contradiction and for Lukács this would be to see the true value of realism at what he understood to be capitalism’s “moment of crisis”.

Lukács will go on to ask what he terms a “simpler question, namely, does the ‘closed integration’, the ‘totality’ of the capitalist system, of bourgeois society, with its unity of economics and ideology, really form an objective whole, independent of consciousness?” (31) Raymond Williams in his working through of notions of base and superstructure notes that there is an indebtedness to Lukács’s principle of social ‘totality’ for an understanding of the Marxist “notion of social being determining consciousness” but that ‘totality’ needs ‘hegemony’ not to lose sight of ‘intention’ and ‘determination’ (“Base” 35-37). In the unfolding of Lukács’s own argument the ‘unity’ of the capitalist economic system “reflected in the consciousness of the men who live in the society, and hence too in the consciousness of poets and thinkers” becomes more violent the more crisis develops. So that “With the general crisis . . . the experience of disintegration becomes firmly entrenched over long periods of time in broad sectors of the population which normally experience the various manifestations of capitalism in a very immediate way” (Lukács 32). Ultimately and potentially, these contradictions in lived experience *may* lead to consciousness, rather determining social being at the superstructural level, especially through ‘articulated’ artistic reflection which allows us to apprehend the productive forces of reality. Exemplary realist works such as those written with ‘commitment’ by Duiker allow the presentation and processes of disintegration and contradiction to become ‘articulated’. Once over it is through the ‘particular,’ the individual in his immediacy, where the ‘universal’ may be grasped in its essential workings. This is the tacit dimension of Lukács’s title “in the balance” and the reason he will advocate the realism of Thomas Mann as the truly ‘modern’ form.

Having defended, from a Marxist perspective, the importance of ‘totality’ Lukács moves directly into the method, or what we have signalled as the ‘way’ of literary works and immediately does away with that bugbear of surface and appearance associated to realism. For Lukács the ‘totality’ is what the “authentic realist” is able to bring into view and he notes that Lenin was to insist “on the practical importance of the category” (33). The “sense of a conscious commitment to understanding and describing real forces” (262) that was central to Williams, is reiterated here, whereby the success of the realist “depends in great measure on how clearly he perceives – as a creative writer – the true significance of whatever phenomenon he depicts” (33). And so we come to the “crux of the matter” as “to understand the correct dialectical unity of appearance and essence”. In terms of practice what the unity then means is that “the slice of life shaped and depicted by the artist and re-experienced by the reader should reveal is the relations between appearance and essence without need for any external commentary” (33-34). The artists’ depictions allow consciousness to apprehend social being and the correspondence and unity of the totality, as it shapes, forms, distorts, wields and in a word, determines relations between individuals to each other in one way, and individuals to communities within the totality in another. By mediating the real conditions of existence and its relation to consciousness and consciousness one to another in relation to the whole, without commentary, objectivity as the objective context is attained in ‘authentic’ literary realism.

As an “illustration” of “appearance and essence” a comparison between the “‘bourgeois refinement’ of Thomas Mann is made with the Surrealism of Joyce” (34). Lukács agrees with Bloch in that the “typical” “state of mind of many people living in the age of imperialism” can be seen to be reflected in “the heroes of both writers” where “we find a vivid evocation of the disintegration, the discontinuities, the ruptures and the ‘crevices’”. Bloch’s “mistake”, for Lukács, “lies merely in the fact that he identifies this state of mind directly and unreservedly with reality itself” and “equates the highly distorted image created in this state of mind with the thing itself, instead of objectively unravelling the essence, the origins and the mediations of the distortion by comparing it with reality”. In other words, Bloch’s “mistake” is to not enact the dialectic of appearance and essence and to hold only to the subjective and not correspond the subjective consciousness to the objective reality ‘independent’ of it (35). Over and against Bloch’s admiration for Joyce, Lukács brings Mann forward as a “creative realist” who,

knows how thoughts and feelings grow out of the life of society and how experiences and emotions are parts of the total complex of reality. As a realist he assigns these parts to their rightful place within the total life context. He shows what area of society they arise from and where they are going to. (36)

This very last statement regarding “arise” and “going to” is of the utmost importance for the following section. Just here that little word “show” becomes so invaluable. The realist through his work helps us to see, understand, and interpret not only the inner workings of ourselves but ourselves in the inner workings of what we experience as reality. And that reality is by no means static. Indeed, Duiker as an ‘authentic’ realist, by way of the ‘heroes,’ that is to say the protagonists of his novels, will reach for free consciousness not in the way of form of modernist practice but by ‘form of life’ as the essence of contradiction.

Lukács will agree that what is “original” in the “novel form” is the ‘way’ it presents life that Watt was to hone in on as well. He also brings articulation to Williams’s use of Emerson as we read in the following:

Every major realist fashions the materials given in his own experience, and in so doing makes use of techniques of abstraction, among others. But his goal is to penetrate the laws governing objective reality and to uncover the deeper, hidden, mediated, not immediately perceptible network of relationships that go to make up society. (38)

The “artistic dialectic of appearance and essence” as ‘way’ and as “goal” is able to show these “laws governing” unseen and moreover, when in its fullness, “The richer, the more diverse, complex and ‘cunning’ (Lenin) this dialectic is, the more firmly it grasps hold of the living contradictions of life and society, then the greater and the more profound the realism will be” (39). We have from Lukács here then what we may take to be excellence in the ‘authentic’ literary realist’s craft.

There is one more step for us to take for a decisive contemporary understanding of realism for our time. Simon Dentith, following the foregrounding of Lukács and Williams (*The Long Revolution*) argues in his contribution to the *Companion*, compellingly, for a “realist synthesis in the nineteenth-century novel” (33-49). Dentith’s linking and differentiation of Williams and Lukács is as follows:

If Raymond Williams describes the synthesis of the nineteenth-century novel in terms of its capacity to give equal weight to the individual and the social, Georg Lukács defines it in a cognate but significantly different way – as the capacity to represent at once surface and depth, to show, that is to say, both the detail and complexity of human lives, and the social and historical forces that underlie them. (43)

Dentith’s ‘synthesis’ hereby brings together Williams’s focus on the “individual and the social” as well as Lukács’s ‘dialectic’ of “appearance and essence” described here as “surface and

depth”. Moreover, Dentith also notes the key aspect of ‘authentic’ realism that both Williams and Lukács have identified. As he continues from above,

The ancient ambiguity in the term ‘realism’ – its reference to the underlying categories rather than their mere phenomenal appearance – reappears in this account, since the capacity of the realist novel to be *authentically* realist lies in its ability to represent those social, historical, and economic forces that are more profound than surface forms. (43-44 Emphases are mine)

Lukács’s ‘synthesis’ for Dentith comes through most determinedly by way of his “notion” of ‘typicality’ which is defined as “the capacity of a characterization to concentrate within an individual figure the most telling and profound characteristics of the social trends of a whole epoch” and by which the “realism of the novel is guaranteed” (44). Dentith remains with the nineteenth-century novel and with ‘typicality’ in those novels and therefore, to my mind, does not activate what is the essential nature of ‘typicality,’ that is to say that it has the ability to act as a source of social critique, now, with a view to futurity. Dentith only gives an intimation, by way of his epigraph<sup>14</sup> and conclusion, that there is an unlikelihood that as an aesthetic realism can be “simply copied” in our own “mediatized world” (49). But this is to concentrate attention only on the ‘way’ realism presents life and where pseudo-realism is possible at the expense of the ‘kind’ immanent to that reality presented in authentic realism. Given Dentith’s engagement with Lukácsian ‘synthesis’ and then following it with ‘typicality’ I find his conclusion surprising and defeatist.

“Marxism” states Lukács in *Realism in the Balance* ‘has always recognized the anticipatory function of ideology” (46). He reminds, to “remain within the sphere of literature” the reader as to what Paul Lafargue states regarding Marx’s Balzac: “‘Balzac was not just the chronicler of his own society, he was also the creator of prophetic figures who were still embryonic under Louis Philippe and who only emerged fully grown after his death, under Napoleon III’. These “*prophetic* figures” as “anticipation” are the “very essence of all authentic realism of any importance” and are, moreover, for Lukács, the true “typical figures” (47; my emphasis).<sup>15</sup> He understands the ‘authentic’ literary realist to be an artist who above all is able to bring into view the essential character of individuals and groups and how these interact with one another in the society in which they participate (47). Lukács furthermore suggests that

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<sup>14</sup> The epigraph is from Jeanette Winterson: “I think we should all read nineteenth-century novels, but we shouldn’t try to write them” (33).

<sup>15</sup> Of interest just here is Erich Auerbach’s “method of explication” in his *Mimesis* where the “real/prophetic” are brought into alignment in contradistinction to the “abstract/allegorical” (568-9) and which now become important for interpretations of *Mimesis* where context for each work is essential.

“those elements which endure” and “which constitute the objective human tendencies” should be central to the realist writer who will then “receive confirmation from subsequent events”. At end, for Georg Lukács, a “writer [who] really belongs to the ranks of the avant-garde is something that only history can reveal, for only after the passage of time will it become apparent whether he has perceived significant qualities, trends, and the social functions of individual human types, and has given them effective and lasting form” (48). And as he continues,

Great realism, therefore, does not portray an immediately obvious aspect of reality but one which is permanent and objectively more significant, namely man in the whole range of his relations to the real world, above all those which outlast mere fashion. . . . To discern and give shape to such underground trends is the great historical mission of the true literary avant-garde. (47-48)

We will return in due course to the idea of humans “in the whole relations to the real world” that Lukács is speaking of as it relates to his concept of ‘authentic’ realism as being able to ‘articulate’ the ‘totality’. Later I will be concerned not so much with the concept of ‘totality’ as that of the ‘universal’ as it functions in language. But, what I do want to emphasise momentarily just here in closure is that the “historical mission” of the “true literary avant-garde” that Lukács speaks of, or what I may call the ‘tradition’ of ‘authentic’ realism, has always been one concerned with new and experimental ways of ‘articulating’ the truth of the ‘kind’ of reality some have had to endure, and others have let endure.

### *Life on the Edges: The Lumpenproletariat / The Underclass*

I am proceeding with extreme rigour in order to gain as sufficiently as is possible a clear grasp of the ‘way’ of Duiker’s distinctly ‘authentic’ realism. I have by now brought much clarity as to what realism is and what today’s ‘authentic’ realist mode entails. A formal analysis underpinning Duiker’s novelistic practice has never been done before and it is hoped that the overriding attention on only the content of his works will now be compensated for. The path is now open for analyses that will conscientiously engage the interpenetrations of his form and content and which make his novels so powerful, in a myriad ways. To “show” the ‘universal’ through the lens of the ‘particular’ and activate the dialectic of “appearance and essence” is his ‘commitment’ and his disclosure. All of the ‘particulars,’ the protagonists of his novels, as well as the other characters that satellite the protagonist, are of a ‘type’. It is now important for us to come to grips with the ‘typicality’ or ‘form of life’ of the protagonists of Duiker’s works. I

will now turn in this direction in the section that follows. I do this in order to make the necessary dialectic between ‘way’ and ‘kind’ as clear as possible.

The social being signified by ‘lumpenproletariat’ comes through to us from Marx.<sup>16</sup> It is in Marx’s *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* of 1852 that this social class makes its most decisive entry into our thinking. Mark Cowling in his essay on the *Eighteenth Brumaire* has pointed out that it may have been “presaged in Engels’ account of the Irish immigrants in *The Condition of the Working Class in England*” (228). To give an indication of the nebulous character of this grouping in the *Brumaire* we have the following characterization by Marx of what the Society of 10 December – the “benevolent association” formed by the “chief of the Paris lumpenproletariat” Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte himself – consisted in:

From the aristocracy there were bankrupted roués of doubtful means and dubious provenance, from the bourgeoisie there were degenerate wastrels on the take, vagabonds, demobbed soldiers, discharged convicts, runaway galley slaves, swindlers and cheats, thugs, pickpockets, conjurers, card-sharps, pimps, brothel keepers, porters, day-labourers, organ grinders, scrap dealers, knife grinders, tinkers and beggars, in short, the whole amorphous, jumbled mass of flotsam and jetsam.  
(63)

Clearly, from this derogatory formulation, we can see that this is by no means an easy category to define. Value-judgments are everywhere present such as “dregs, refuse and scum” and in the *The Communist Manifesto* where Cowling states the term makes its initial appearance (228), as ““dangerous class”” and “social scum” (*Manifesto* 63) or yet further, that young men can become engaged in the “basest banditry and the foulest corruption” (Marx qtd. Cowling 229). What are we to make of Marx’s use of lumpenproletariat to delegitimize the finance aristocracy?:

The finance aristocracy, in its mode of acquisition as well as in its pleasures, is nothing but the rebirth of the lumpenproletariat on the heights of bourgeois society, . . . in 1847, on the most prominent stages of bourgeois society the same scenes were publicly enacted that regularly lead the lumpenproletariat to brothels, to workhouses

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<sup>16</sup> The denotative etymology of *lumpenproletariat*, as *lump* “probably” stems from thirteen century uses of the word which in early Dutch, Scandinavian dialect and Middle High German means, piece, block and rag, respectively. ‘Lumpen’, informally in English is “stupid or unthinking” but the German *Lump* from where it comes means “vagabond” and is “influenced in meaning by *Lumpen*” as in “rag”. *Lumpenproletariat*, therefore in Marxist theory is “the amorphous urban social group below the *proletariat*, consisting of criminals, tramps, etc.” and literally in German means the “ragged proletariat”. There is a lot to be taken from this for analysis especially if we consider a second informal English sense of the word ‘lump’ as to “tolerate or put up with” (*Collins English Dictionary* 876).

and lunatic asylums, to the bar of justice, to the dungeon, and to the scaffold. (Marx qtd. 230)

The category thus expands to include the unemployed, the institutionalized and the criminalized, from sex work, to mental illness to those having been incarcerated and put to death for their crimes. Once more, as the quote above suggests, it is more a swear-concept than a serious category of social being in Marx. The overall point, as Mark Cowling too concedes in his “analysis of Marx’s main definitions” (232) is formalized most cogently as a conclusion by Frank Bovenkerk: “In their [Marx and Engels’] more theoretical works, their definition of the term lumpenproletariat is unclear and inconsistent. Anyone who tries to base further study upon their interpretation of the term will soon be at his wits’ end” (Bovenkerk qtd. 232-233). As a referent and a point of analysis the lumpenproletariat fall flat in Marxist theory.

What we are looking at are social process pushing individuals and collectives (as the case of contemporary refugees point to) to the edges of existence in capitalist society. It is a socio-economic vector or an ‘arising’ and ‘going’ as Lukács formulated it in regards to Mann’s realism that may also very well become the place of ‘total’ fundamental contradiction of consciousness and objective inevitable opposition to the dominant culture. What we have then is not a crevice which has always had institutional safety nets to prevent small scale chaos from ensuing (insane asylums, the ‘work house,’ prisons), but rather now a gorge. One thing is clear, the lumpenproletariat, whoever that may refer to, are those who do not ‘fit’ and have for one or other reason fallen *out* of and are not proper to, the social order in which they exist.

Are we in this kaleidoscope of social existence not perhaps seeing a glimpse of a legitimate reason for wanting to go outside capitalist society and the possibility of building something else outside? I believe we are. I believe Duiker was reaching for this and is the reason why all of his protagonists – who have lumpenproletarian ‘forms of life’ – attempt to escape to something else. Not one of the protagonists of his novels can maintain their existence. One will therefore go entirely outside society – such is what happens with Azure in *Thirteen Cents*, who interestingly enough for our later purposes even tries to go outside of social language. After harrowing sexual and physical abuse as a street child he attempts to escape through the production of his own reality on Table Mountain and then finally into the spirit world. I will in the next section demonstrate me reason for saying this last. Tshepo as well, who in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, with some very serious personal history and continuous financial strain cannot maintain his life as a student and does not want to enter into beggary, which is to say, a paltry existence on the edge of society. He therefore finds himself in another form of lumpenproletarian existence, for a brief time, in the Valkenburg psychiatric

hospital. After trying to maintain some semblance of normal existence as a waitron, he is raped, and thereafter finds escape in another form of lumpenproletarian life, as a prostitute in the gay sub-culture of Cape Town. In the *The Hidden Star*, the schoolgirl Nolitye's marginal life in the poverty stricken township becomes unmaintainable the more her destiny to rescue her real mother and her father (who she was told died in a mining accident) from the underworld becomes necessary, in the face of the witch claiming to be her mother and the life she has had to endure with her.

They all attempt to escape their reality in one way or another. The 'edge' or the lumpenproletarian realities, as there are in fact many – although being represented in all of Duiker's novels – are difficult to classify and merely stamping 'lumpenproletarian' onto them doesn't do the 'particular' experiences justice, especially seeing how bankrupt the (non)-class is in Marxist theory. But Duiker's 'authentic' realism, his penetration into the objective reality "to uncover the deeper, hidden, mediated, not immediately perceptible network of relationships that go to make up society" (*Aesthetics* 38) as Lukács has identified, certainly points towards the need for contemplation in our age.

A realism that is 'authentic' can most practicably be an active production and reproduction of the here and now for future understanding. After all, what is a "workhouse" a "lunatic asylum" a "brothel" and a "scaffold" in the present? What have "tinkers" and "knife grinders" and "organ grinders" and "brothel keepers" and "card-sharps" and "conjurers" and "pickpockets" and "runaway galley slaves" got to do with our present reality? It may very well be due to a reasoning such as this that Charles Murray in specific turned away from the lumpenproletariat to his new contemporaneous reformulation of the social category of the "underclass".

According to Cowling, Murray "first noticed the underclass in the town where he grew up" and that "their homes were littered and unkempt. The men in the family were unable to hold a job for more than a few weeks at a time. Drunkenness was common. The children grew up ill schooled and ill behaved and contributed a disproportionate share of the local juvenile delinquents" (Murray qtd. Cowling 233). The class from which Murray thus arose were for him, as the shadow behind the discourse here clearly intends, "barbarians" (Murray qtd. Cowling 235). That is to say, as the other has always been named, the uncivilized. There are in Murray as discussed by Cowling, "three interlocking features of his account, illegitimacy, crime and idleness" (233). Beyond the behavioural, and more towards social processes Murray, as with the *Manifesto*'s "dangerous class" sees in this ostensible "underclass", "a threat to the survival of 'free institutions and a civil society'" (Cowling and Murray qtd. 235). Cowling will



himself go on to give a more empirical, sociological and political analysis of the development of the lumpenproletarian/underclass phenomenon. From a critical perspective he leaves the reader with a series of questions that it would do well to posit just here for a more thoroughgoing understanding of, as we discussed in the last section, the Lukácsian ‘arising’ and ‘going’ of this phenomenon in society, albeit in an entirely different context:

Thus although the lumpenproletariat/underclass should be seen as invalid as a substantive concept, there are plenty of issues surrounding it which need attention. For socialists these include the following. Do people who have developed some lumpen characteristics simply get back to work when offered decent opportunities? If not, what should be done about it? How much does it matter if some unskilled people choose to live on welfare benefits rather than do boring jobs? Is it genuinely true that the services of some less skilled and less able people are becoming superfluous in capitalist society? What should socialists aim to do about this? Particularly if it is because unskilled manufacturing jobs have shifted to third world countries which this work is helping to develop? (239-40)

Socialism is then for Cowling, looking for insight into the marginal existence from the perspective of someone living in the United Kingdom. It is significant that Cowling focuses on the so called ‘underclass’ for the putting forward of his politics as it demonstrates this phenomenon to be an Achilles heel in the capitalist ‘totality’. Whether we agree that socialism is the best lens through which to understand what is taking place here or not, the point that I have wanted to make, is that social and economic forces are relegating people to the margins of capitalist society and ‘authentic’ literary realism is one of the ways in which we can begin to understand just what exactly is going on and where it is exactly we are possibly going.

Before we move to Duiker, to his distinct realism, and from the ‘universal’ to the ‘particular’ in order to gain better perspective on this social phenomenon and the consciousness that are bound to it and which may in fact become unbound by it, we need to differentiate the continuum of this amorphous mass. There are the poor and then there are the dangerous. What I mean by this is that in this ‘*lump*’ or ‘under’ of society there are certainly the “dangerous class” as Marx stated and these are a real part of life for those in poverty, destitution, or institutionalized in those various forms.. We need only think of Tshepo, Azure and Nolitye’s encounter, all in their own unique ways, with these elements. They are the villains and the grotesque in contradistinction to our heroes and the sublime. I therefore suggest that we not merely ‘*lump*’ and ‘underclass’ them as some ‘universal’ and general homogenous mass but always give them, at least in ‘authentic’ literary realism and literary criticism of that realism,

their due ‘particularity’ so as to remove the surface appearance and develop a deeper understanding of the “underlying forces” that situate them thus, just as Duiker does. We will however, in this thesis, for a lack of a better sign, to not generate confusion, and to prove a later point, use ‘lumpen’.

### *A Place to Call Home*

It is with much deliberation that I have chosen the “slice of life” (*Aesthetics* 33-34) as Lukács terms it that I have from Duiker’s oeuvre for a conclusion to what ‘authentic’ realism is and is capable of. I considered a little known short story notably entitled “Escape” published in the *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* in 2004. The short story’s activation of ‘typicality’ and ‘synthesis’ as we now understand that from my working with Lukács in the previous to last section would have been perfect. It plots the social hopelessness of the character Marumo who even after quitting as a bouncer at a nightclub where he held “a young prostitute’s head over the toilet bowl while she puked her guts out as a result of a near fatal overdose” is able to state that “in poverty there is still choice” (202). Marumo does, unfortunately himself eventually go on to crime. Prostitution and crime are desperate choices for those forced to endure ‘lumpen’ realities. Needless to say as we will see, this does not necessarily coincide with Duiker’s ‘alter-nativist’ vision from his novels though and I opted, instead, to only mention it here.

Another avenue that I thought may be useful was to focus on the “cheap flat in Sea Point” (150) that Tshepo in the *Quiet Violence* is helped to get by his friend Mmbatho and who he shares with the ‘lumpen’ villain Chris Swart. My reasoning in this was to unlock the nexus of social and institutional forces that come into view by way of Tshepo’s encounter with this character and in this space. They both for instance start off as unemployed.<sup>17</sup> Chris is from the

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<sup>17</sup> According to Statistics South Africa the current population is believed to be just short of 53 million with a 2014 first quarter unemployment estimate of 25.2 percent. The economy (GDP) has more or less flat-lined over the last four years with the manufacturing sector (previously key) experiencing a decline. Furthermore, “in line with structural changes in many economies” finance, real estate and service sector business has increased but on the whole “the global economic crisis” has caused “a deceleration in [the] rate of economic growth” <[http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/?page\\_id=735&id=1](http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=735&id=1)>.

Cape Flats.<sup>18</sup> He had been in prison before meeting Tshepo.<sup>19</sup> Tshepo had just been released from a psychiatric hospital.<sup>20</sup> So on and so forth. Part of my strategy in this was to foreground Raymond Williams's "brilliant reminder of the exclusionary dynamics of representation" (Higgins 2001) as we have it from *Culture and Society*:

The masses are always the others, whom we don't know, and can't know. Yet now, in our kind of society, we see these others regularly, in their myriad variations; stand, physically, beside them. They are here, and we are here with them. And that we are with them is of course the whole point. (299-300)

By focusing on Tshepo and Chris's relationship, I would, on the one hand have been able to give full force to Williams's reminder of the physical proximity and relation that we may sometimes share with dangerous 'lumpen' individuals and groups. On the other hand I would have been able to bring to view a contemporary enactment of Marx and Engels's 'sinking of the classes' thesis from the *Manifesto* where the much vaunted "all that is solid melts into air" quote is given its full formulation: "All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real condition of life, and his *relations* with his kind" (*Manifesto* 51 my emphasis). To have taken this option would, once more, to have been unfaithful to Duiker's 'aler-nativist' vision. I have in the end chosen a scene that helps us to understand not only Duiker's 'authentic' realism and his 'alter-nativist' world outlook as such, but also Duiker's excellence as a realist writer.

In *Thirteen Cents*, Azure, no longer able to maintain his 'lumpen' existence on the extreme edges of capitalist society, escapes to Table Mountain where he can experience a reality more like the one in his dreams. The day prior to the annihilation of the world by rain of fire that ends *Thirteen Cents* Azure climbs Table Mountain. Being in a storm and hungry he begins looking for his special cave but gets lost and decides to settle for just anywhere that will

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<sup>18</sup> According to the City of Cape Town's Strategic Development and GIS Department and Statistics South Africa the 2011 census revealed that the population of the Cape Flats is 583 380. Of this estimate just over 70 000 are unemployed while 150 000 are "Not Economically Active". More than 50% of households in this population earn less than R3 200 per month (City of Cape Town – 2011 Census – Cape Flats Planning District 2-4).

<sup>19</sup> According to the Minister of Correctional Services, the prison population of South Africa is the highest in Africa and ninth in the world with 160 000 inmates: "every month 23 000 inmates exit Correctional Centres" Sibusiso Ndebele is reported as having stated in March of 2013, and "at the same time 25 000 are admitted," that is to say that each month this particular population actually experiences growth  
<<http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/817158004ebd2ff0bffd9bfb7074a8d3f/SAs-high-prison-population-ranked-first-in-Africa-20130203>>.

<sup>20</sup> According to the 2007 WHO-AIMS report on mental health systems in South Africa there are "3,460 outpatient mental health facilities; 80 day treatment facilities . . . 41 psychiatric inpatient units . . . 63 community residential facilities . . . and 23 mental hospitals" (*WHO-AIMS Report on Mental Health Systems in South Africa* 5) . A relatively large portion of the population are hereby catered for in terms of mental disorders and illness.

give him shelter. His little chant, the refrain that we will have to the very last, while on this journey through the rain and wind and mist is “My mother is dead. My father is dead” (154). He manages to find “a crevice between rocks” and squeezes through into the darkness of a deep bat-filled cave; “You’re getting closer, I tell myself” (155). This thought is his first on entering. He removes his wet clothing and battles until his lighter catches for him to be able to see. Once he has a light he descends further into the cave and finds the remnants of a stone circled fire that will allow him to build his own. The warmth makes him less hungry and he widens the circumference for a larger fire. “On one wall” of the cave,

there are strange markings. Someone drew stick people and they carry spears and run towards a cow. But the cow is drawn really well. I can see its horns and its tail. I look at the strange drawings and a funny thought comes to me. (157)

Azure, moving round and round the fire begins “clapping to a rhythm” and “hopping” and “skipping” and “bounding” and “dancing”. He starts to “fling [his] arms wildly” and closes his eyes and “see[s] a vision of [him]self running like the wind through a forest”. He stops to feed the fire and notes a small hole with a “little wind sneaking through” which “makes a sound. It is the sound of dreams burning” (158). We highlight momentarily here the import of the idea of “dreams” for the *Quiet Violence of Dreams* which was under construction while *Thirteen Cents* was here coming to completion. Feeling “feverish with energy” Azure keeps “dancing”:

When I close my eyes I see animals running at a furious speed. I see rhinos, wild cows with big horns, elephants and even lions. They seem to be running away from something. I even see a swarm of birds that make a dark cloud in the sky. The earth comes alive with the sound of these running animals. I dance round the fire and clap till I start to bleed through the nose. I hold my head up and keep dancing. The hairs on my back stand upright. Like a snake that sensation crawls up my spine and erupts in my head. . . . My body feels light. . . . I dance till I’m so exhausted that I collapse on the ground.

“When the madness has left” Azure, staring into the fire can “still see animals running in a wild stampede. Trees fly into the air and reach for the sun”. He “start[s] to feel hungry” and begins marking his body with ash. “A strange feeling fills” him as if he has “done this before”. He instinctively knows the technique used for the rock art and it reminds him of the recurring dream that he had earlier on the mountain: “I look at them and think of that girl in my dreams but I forget her name. I only remember her beautiful moon face” (159). He is of course referring to (the possibly San woman) Saartjie.

Azure's experience is a 'shamanistic' one. By using the concept of "shamanism" we mean specifically, following arch-archaeologist David Lewis-Williams, the "making of southern African San rock art" associated with the "medicine, healing, curing or trance dance (as it is various called) [and which] is the central San ritual" and the "core of San belief" (252). The ritual is described by Lewis-Williams as "intense rhythmic dancing, hypnotic clapping and swishing of dancing rattles, hyperventilation and intense concentration [by which] they enter a trance state, during which they are believed to experience soul-loss". Moreover, we are told that "To enter trance, San shamans say that they harness a supernatural potency that the nineteenth-century /Xam called *!gi*: and that the twentieth-century Ju'/'oansi still call *n/om*. At the moment of break-through they are said to 'die', that is, their spirits leave their bodies and travel to the spirit realm, as they are believed to do in physical death" (252). May we then from this interpret that what follows for Azure at the close of *Thirteen Cents*, him seeing the destruction of the world in the way that he does, as being not the actual destruction, not even the textual destruction as a collapsing of the ability to any longer make meaning, but an experience from his "travel to the spirit realm"? Whatever we may decide this would certainly not be to merely engage in a 'surface' reading of this "great" (*Aesthetics* 47-48) 'authentic' realist "slice of life" (*Aesthetics* 33-34) by Duiker.

In an abstract to an invited contribution for "Key Informants on the History of Anthropology" in *Ethnos* we are told that "in the 1970s and 1980s" there was a "major reinterpretation of southern African rock art and Upper Palaeolithic art" ("Abstract" N. pag.). The Copernican Revolution was from "An earlier interpretation of the rock art as representing hunters' impressions of their prey [which] was replaced by sophisticated interpretations of the cosmology of the first inhabitants of South Africa". Of immense importance for our discussion on literary realism is the fact that Lewis-Williams in "two moments of astonishment" realised that a panel from the Drakensburg which he considers his "Rosetta Stone" gave rise to "idiomatic and metaphorical, rather than illustrative, parallels between it and what [he] had read in the ethnography: it was *not* a literal, 'realistic' depiction of San daily life" (251; my emphasis). The San rock paintings – especially those containing the "key symbol" of an Eland (which in the paintings look very much like a cow) with its "spectrum of associations and contexts" (255) – had hitherto only been seen in light of that exact same prejudice associated with literary realism. They were being 'read' only according to their "appearance" and "surface" and hence to the interpretation of it being merely representations of "San daily life". In other words they were seen as naturalistic representations of reality and not in terms of their ability to 'articulate' "hidden or underlying forces or movements . . . which it is the whole

purpose of realism to discover or express” (261) as Williams has warned. The ‘conscious commitment’ of the shamans in their paintings was in actuality to reveal realities “not as static *appearance* but as movement of psychological . . . social . . . physical” and we may now add spiritual “forces” (*Keywords* 261). Rock art as anthropological realism is to ‘show’ the San beliefs, rituals, and cosmology. Much in the same way that Duiker’s ‘authentic’ realism brings ‘typicality’ and “synthesis” for us. The Western bias as to the art of the dawn of man as “such artistic refinement” and “aesthetic refinement” not being “possible for simian ‘primitives’” and the “paleolithic barbarity” (n.p.) as Michel Weber critiques in his essay on ‘Shamanism and Proto-Consciousness’ is now in a strange continuum of bias to contemporary artistic practice, that exact same way of knowing and seeing the world that would deny in realism what it really is, and what it is really, able to do. We have here a classic example of what we will later discuss as Walter Mignolo’s “zero point epistemology” (80). In the chapter to follow we will hold up to the light the ‘why’ of bias such as this by working with the ‘alter-nativist’ world outlook, as it appears variously, in order to uncover some ‘underlying truths’ of the ‘zero point’ of contemporary culture(s).

## **Chapter Two: Critique**

### **Duiker's 'Alter-native' View**

Pity the laden one; this wandering woe  
May visit you and me.

- George Eliot *Middlemarch* (793)

Thus, the prose-writer is a man (sic) who has chosen a certain method of secondary action which we may call action by disclosure. It is therefore permissible to ask him this second question: "What aspect of the world do you want to disclose? What change do you want to bring into the world by this disclosure?"

- Jean-Paul Sartre *What is Literature?* (13)

### *Deviance in the Cave*

I remember the football idol David Beckham's press statement when, as captain for England in May 2001, he first styled his hair in a Mohawk.<sup>21</sup> It was, if my memory serves me correctly, influenced by Martin Scorsese and Paul Schrader's *Taxi Driver* (1976).<sup>22</sup> As it turns out, *ex post facto*, this haircut had already been tried in 2000 but manager Sir Alex Ferguson had forced Beckham to shave it off.<sup>23</sup> The 'uncivilised' hairstyle made its return in 2002 for the FIFA World Cup and again in 2009 when Beckham was playing soccer in the United States. His son, Cruz, now sported the style as well and would do so for at least two years.<sup>24</sup> Back in August 2001 in England, the "yob-look" disappeared after a short while – in order – as Beckham is stated as saying, "to stop children who copied him getting into trouble at school".<sup>25</sup> The act that was, according to Beckham "a bit of a laugh"<sup>26</sup> and which Sir Ferguson clearly did not think was, has wider implications as I will argue in this thesis. Beckham as one of the superstars of the entertainment industry embodies the representation of a way of life that perhaps millions would like to emulate. His status is iconic, even if, he does engage in 'alter-native' hairstyling from time to time.

### *A Deviant in the Tribe*

The 'authentic' realist film that underscores all this media attention is Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*.<sup>27</sup> The reason that I am now turning to this film is firstly, and more directly, because it is from the influence of the protagonist of this movie, Travis Bickle (Robert De Niro), that

<sup>21</sup> See: <http://www.theguardian.com/football/2001/may/24/newsstory.sport4>

<sup>22</sup> See: <http://ca.askmen.com/fashion/galleries/david-beckham-hair-styles-10.html>

<sup>23</sup> See: <http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/news-and-comment/david-beckham-sir-alex-ferguson-made-me-shave-off-mohawk-hours-before-2000-charity-shield-10072409.html> and <http://www.express.co.uk/sport/football/560607/David-Beckham-Sir-Alex-Ferguson-shave-head-toilets-Wembley>

<sup>24</sup> See: <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/sport/david-beckhams-new-mohawk-hair-style-recalls-his-glory-days-of-2001/story-e6f9ey0-1225798393626> and <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2061270/Cruz-Beckham-sports-mohican-hairstyle-decade-father-David-followed-punk-rock-trend.html>

<sup>25</sup> See: <http://www.theguardian.com/g2/story/0,3604,543589,00.html>

<sup>26</sup> See: <http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2001/may/25/fashion1>

<sup>27</sup> Scorsese but more directly Schrader had the characterization of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* as a precursor to this Film (Balfour n.p): <http://www.popentertainment.com/scorseseschneider.htm>



Beckham was to first begin styling his hair in this ‘alter-native’ way. That Beckham was to do so goes some way in giving concrete expression to the way in which art is able to influence the direction and consciousness of a society. Secondly, and more importantly for our discussion, it is because the ‘lumpen’ reality that Scorsese and scriptwriter Paul Schrader present is worthwhile to bring into the frame for the parallels that can be drawn between Duiker’s *Thirteen Cents* and *Quiet Violence* where prostitution and marginal existence are important themes.

The vigilantism and ostensible ‘psychosis’ of the protagonist in the film, the Vietnam veteran Travis Bickle – who comes across remarkably as a man in revolt, albeit in monistic isolation<sup>28</sup> – presents to us the position of the ‘active nihilist’. What I mean by this is that as an ethical individual, Bickle attempts to intervene in the injustices and ills of his social order, thereby making him a committed participant and not a mere observer to his reality.<sup>29</sup> As a New-York taxi-driver, Bickle is continually and uniquely confronted by the ‘lumpen’ realities of life in a megalopolis. Our anti-tragic hero becomes enamoured with a woman associated to a political personages’ presidential campaign but after having been rejected by her – instead of taking her to a mainstream cinema for their date Bickle takes her to a pornographic one – his relational nexus to the rest of his society becomes more and more disintegrated. We recall here that Lukács has identified in ‘authentic’ realism an ability to be able to ‘articulate’ the processes of disintegration and contradiction of the consciousness of individuals in the capitalist social ‘unity’ (Lukács 23).

Bickle intervenes in the social order that, as a taxi driver, he continuously drives through and does this after he experiences and reacts (by shooting a robber in a store) to a minor crime. Central to the film’s plot, he experiences adolescent prostitution (a young girl (Jodi Foster) gets into his taxi but is forced out by her pimp) and Bickle reacts by trying to persuade, and providing the means, for her to return to her family. Her name is meaningfully given as ‘Iris’.

It is after his encounter with Iris and before Bickle becomes violent that the famous Mohawk makes its appearance. Bickle, we may interpret, attempts to strike at the civilizational and Symbolic locus of power that has allowed the ‘dirtier’ and more dangerous empirical substrata of society to form; he attempts, but comes nowhere near, a presumed assassination

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<sup>28</sup> I am using this in the sense given to it by Albert Camus in *The Rebel* (1951). For an analysis of the development of Camus’ “ethical doctrine” (32) out of solitude, see Hallie. Scorsese mentions Camus in the Balfour Interview.

<sup>29</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche describes this “active nihilism” as an “*enhanced spiritual strength*” (Will 21) understood to be an “affirmative kind of nihilism—the creation of new values in the face of the abyss” (Levine 138).

attempt of the Senator. His desire to eliminate a member of the ‘upperworld’ having been thwarted, Bickle returns to the ‘underworld’ and kills Iris’s pimp, the bouncer of the brothel, and the current client having, or attempting to have intercourse with her who is associated to organised crime. Organised crime may, incidentally here but also as I have noted previously, be understood as the true “dangerous class”. In *Thirteen Cents* Azure has direct contact with and is tortured by a South African version of this element of ‘lumpen’ reality. Bickle towards the end of *Taxi Driver*, after having rescued Iris from the world that she had begun to associate with, attempts suicide but not having any more ammunition he does so symbolically, with hand and index finger to the temple. A powerful image indeed. My reasoning as to why I have included Beckham and *Taxi Driver* at the outset of this chapter will now make itself clear. By bringing *Taxi Driver* into the frame it also has the dual purpose of underscoring ‘typicality’ and the ‘authentic’ realist method for us. The discussion for the present chapter on critique necessitates that we turn our full attention now to Duiker.

*Assignments for and from an ‘Alter-nativist’*

Kabelo Sello Duiker is not the popular name by which we have come to know one of South Africa’s “new literary lions” (162) as McQueen Motuba terms it. We pervasively encounter the name as ‘K.’ Sello Duiker. This was not always so. Annari van der Merwe, as publisher and life in writing companion of Duiker, has noted that he still referred to himself as ‘Kabelo’ while writing his first manuscripts (6). In *Words Gone Two Soon*, a collaborative project paying tributes to Phaswane Mpe and K. Sello Duiker – but aiming for a “reconnection of the current crop of writers with their predecessors” (xiii) – van der Merwe refers continually to Duiker as ‘Sello’.<sup>30</sup> One part of van der Merwe’s tribute includes correspondence from Duiker who, in June 2002, was a writer in residence in the United Kingdom as part of the Commonwealth Prize that he received for his debut *Thirteen Cents*. One of the tasks arranged by the Booktrust, “an independent charity that administers the Commonwealth’s literary prizes section” was to ask writers to put together an article in which they express “their stance re [regarding] the CW [Commonwealth]” (Duiker qtd. van der Merwe 9). Another assignment required that recipients

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<sup>30</sup> Charl Blignaut, a colleague and friend to Duiker, in his *City Press* article ‘The Interview: Rereading K Sello Duiker also refers to the author as ‘Sello’: <http://www.citypress.co.za/lifestyle/interview-rereading-sello-duiker/>

give their “first impressions of England” (Duiker qtd. 7). Duiker signs-off as is evidenced in the anxious body of the e-mail of the draft for the former, as ‘Sello’.

In his “first impressions of England” assignment Duiker, characteristic to the subtlety of his literary politics, hones in on the “shades of identity” (Mzamane qtd. Khumalo 22). What he initially perceives as the “fringe and marginal” (Duiker qtd. Lackay 21), of life in the metropolis has to do with the semiological sign projection of individuals who all have the “same outlandish hairstyle” (Duiker qtd. van der Merwe 7). The ‘Mohawk’ which he at first believes may be indicative of a sub-cultural “punk revival or something?” is adorned not only by young men – one of which has “huge earrings” and an “English flag on the front of his T-shirt” – but also by “a pair of twins fighting over a toy”. The most peculiar expression of this style for Duiker comes through by way of “a guy in a pin-striped suit . . . The strangest combination of orthodox and *anti-establishment* I’d ever seen – a suit and a mohawk (sic)” (my emphasis). Later in the same year Duiker was to reiterate this interest in mixture (a trope throughout his oeuvre) by stating that his reader “wears anything he likes, is considered a bit eccentric and is definitely *anti-establishment*, someone likely to wear jeans and a T-shirt with a dinner jacket to a black-tie event” (Duiker, “Last Word” 29; my emphasis).

There is, however, bathos brought to bear in the English-Mohawk fashion in that it is not the return activation of ‘barbarism’ onto ‘modern’ identity within the urban space; the “shades of identity” that Duiker encounters and finds interesting. Neither, for us, does it have the critical relevance associated directly with postcolonial hybrid theory.<sup>31</sup> Rather, as he soon discovers, it is something more akin to the popular and fetishized: “London pubs and football” is the title that he gives to this assignment. Duiker having directed attention to this fashion statement now notes the optimism with which the locals anticipate England against Denmark in the 2002 FIFA World Cup and jocularly asks a bystander “what if they lose”? Duiker reports the response as:

he looks at me as though I uttered a blasphemy and then smiles, as though to say, of course you’re not from here. There’s a religious tone in his voice as he says out loud, ‘The boys will win.’ . . . ‘Otherwise there’ll be national depression.’ I laugh but sense that his statement couldn’t be that far from the truth. (8)

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<sup>31</sup> For more thoroughgoing critical scholarship with regards to the postcolonial phenomenon of hybridity, see generally: Edward Said *Culture and Imperialism*; Homi Bhabha in several places but especially *The Location of Culture* and “Difference”; Robert Young *Colonial Desire; Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* and Bakhtin *The Dialogic Imagination*.

In the customary singing of the national anthem prior to the match “it all falls into place. Beckham. He’s also wearing a mohawk!”

This is by no means the end of this specific assignment and Duiker will go on to relate the ways in which English football are associated with nationalism and intoxication. As a fashion trend, the Mohawk – mimicry from a football idol who mimicked a film – may not actually necessitate any direct changes in values, meanings, and consciousness. But, Sir Alex Ferguson’s strange reaction to Beckham’s “bit of a laugh” and the purposeful and antagonistic repetition by Beckham of the style through the years and onto his own son are symptomatic of an element of control of individuals, and their resistance to this, in the mid-to-mid upper echelons of the capitalist framework. Idols do and can influence the flow of culture. The honing in on the element of fashion in this assignment by Duiker does, to my mind, allow for the sighting of, what we will in a moment term an ‘alter-nativism’ as a reality of contemporary cultural processes and consciousness.<sup>32</sup>

The second assignment for the Booktrust is one that is part “of a series of writers from the Commonwealth” (9) where they are all asked to write about their stance to the Commonwealth. The partial draft for this is preceded by a personal correspondence between van der Merwe and Duiker. The correspondence begins, “I finally started writing the article and it wasn’t that bad actually – the writing that is”. It was then, we may infer, a particularly difficult topic for Duiker. Looking to his novels we can see why this difficulty exists. In his literary works, seen in relation to one another, Duiker is all about developing perspectivity. We have actually already begun to explore Duiker’s perspective as an ‘alter-nativism’.<sup>33</sup>

The title given for the assignment draft by Duiker is “A Question of Diversity”. As an African regional prize winner, Duiker notes that it has, “been an opportunity to . . . step away from South Africa and see what the world thinks of us and ponder what I think of us. And how

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<sup>32</sup> Post-Marxists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, whose viewpoints may be introduced here as we will be bringing it into the discussion shortly, would see this as a movement *not* towards the promise of liberation that it appears to be but rather to that of difference as an acquiescing to the rule of Empire (143-46). One specific point made by Hardt and Negri may be put forward just here and that is that the “Truth will not make us free, but taking control of the production of truth will” (Hardt and Negri 156).

<sup>33</sup> I am aware of constructivist psychology stemming from George Kelly’s Constructive Alternativism. I am using ‘alter-nativism’ as a marker that would here underscore personal/social constructivist and – its dichotomous other in – objectivist methods of knowing the world as both being epistemic enactments of a continuing practical irrelevance (for all the claims to a related neopragmatism of the kind advocated by Rorty (1999) for the former) to the plight of the poor, ignored, mistreated and deviant falling out of, turning away from, and attempting to escape life under capitalism. The psychopathological rendering of these positions would, by way of alter-nativism of the kind being explored here, return the gaze on to the practitioners and thinkers themselves. For a general overview of the terrain of constructivist and objectivist psychology, see: Spencer A. McWilliams “Cultivating Constructivism: Inspiring Intuition and Promoting Process and Pragmatism, *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 29:1, 1-29. Available at: <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10720537.2014.980871>>.

accurate or inaccurate perceptions of South Africa have been and are” (9, 10). He moreover states, “This residency has been an invaluable opportunity, so yes, *in that sense* the Commonwealth works for me if it allows me to move around and widen my perspective” (10: my emphasis). This is an important statement from Duiker.

As opposed to the lighter, more documentary or, ‘alter-nativist’ realist ethnography of mass culture in the United Kingdom of his previous assignment, Duiker now takes a further step in the critical prescriptive direction:

Certainly, I have become much more aware of how diverse South Africa really is . . . In London, the presence of people from other countries is inescapable. How the UK and the rest of Europe are trying to deal with foreigners and xenophobia has been interesting for me . . . The stance which seems to be encouraged here is one of tolerance . . . But are we ever going to move beyond tolerance? Is it ludicrous, even naïve, to suggest that we might ever go beyond tolerance and appreciate, even admire each other’s cultures? That seems to me to be what we’re really dealing with in South Africa. (10)

The insinuation that there are distinct similarities between South Africa and the UK concerning “foreigners and xenophobia” is subtle. Duiker is here trying to guard against being too outspoken because it is, after all, a competition among the writers. The summation presented to us from this draft is “I suppose it’s a question of diversity over uniformity”. Duiker is here then bringing into view the discourse of diversity and multiculturalism so prevalent to postcolonial thought of the twentieth century *fin de siècle*.

The postcolonial moment is a moment in the history of ideas challenged as nascent by such thinkers as decolonial theorist Walter D. Mignolo whose argument for contemporary relevance in this regard is neatly summed as follows:

The problem is that if indeed postcolonial theories claim globality, if not universality, it may be problematic. For such a claim will reset the imperial pretensions that postcolonial studies critiques imperialism for. It would become an imperial design as any other. If that were the case, if postcolonial studies in England were to replicate the underside of imperial England, postcolonial studies would then compete with Marxism for global dominance! (57)

Mignolo, against universalist pretensions and for the pluriversal decolonial option, which is to say a celebration of difference in cultural epistemology and values, is arguing against knowledge projections from the West that includes theorising the world that does not put truth and objectivity in parenthesis (52-62). In terms of postcolonialist and postmodernist theories

as having been assimilated in the march towards 'Empire' Hardt and Negri will have a strategically different diagnosis; one which will situate them in paradigmatic opposition to the decolonial option of Mignolo's pluriversalism but that nevertheless too aims to critique the postcolonial moment. Their line of argumentation is as follows:

In short, what if a new paradigm of power, a postmodern sovereignty, has come to replace the modern paradigm and rule through differential hierarchies of the hybrid and fragmentary subjectivities that these theorists celebrate? In this case, modern forms of sovereignty would no longer be at issue, and the postmodernist and postcolonialist strategies that appear to be liberatory would not challenge but in fact coincide with and even unwittingly reinforce the new strategies of rule! (138)

Mignolo as well as Hardt and Negri, from different perspectives, are highly critical as to the underlying dynamics of the postcolonial moment. Duiker, whose veiled criticism in these Booktrust assignments, not only in form but also in content as his first impressions assignment demonstrates, is thus aligned with these thinkers.

The Commonwealth Writer's Prize for best first book that year went to native-born Zadie Smith for her *White Teeth*. Smith's novel is a multiculturalist themed work that speaks directly to the issues that Duiker has here raised, or rather that the Booktrust, asked to be raised. Raised as can be surmised by the formulation of the questions of the assignments to better know the "impressions" and "stance" of the incoming Other. *Thirteen Cents* seen within the fulcrum of the questions set for this assignment was never going to win.

Edward Said in *Orientalism* at one point refers his reader to a 1976 interview that he gave and states that "the literary-cultural establishment as a whole has declared the serious study of imperialism and culture off limits" (13).<sup>34</sup> Prior to this Said states that "Culture, of course, is to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons work not through domination but by what Gramsci calls consent" (7). The manufacturing of consent, then, seen in these hegemonic terms, is a highly intimate, and at the same time systemic process. One which Said 'articulates' as follows with regards the phenomenon of 'Orientalism'; which is not "some nefarious 'Western' imperialist plot" but, and I quote at length:

It is rather a *distribution* of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an *elaboration* not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves,

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<sup>34</sup> "Interview with Diacritics." *Diacritics* 6:3 (1976): 30-47 and specifically page 38.

Orient and Occident) but also a whole series of “interests” which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it *is*, rather than expresses, a certain *will* or *intention* to understand, in some cases control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political . . . power intellectual . . . power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral . . . Indeed, my real argument is that Orientalism is—and does not simply represent—a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with “our” world. (12)

Taking into consideration our discussion of ‘alter-nativism’ and Mignolo’s ‘pluriversalism’ as has been discussed, what happens if we rotate Said’s model between the two poles of ‘I’ and ‘Thou’ one hundred and eighty degrees? A global and diverse ‘alter-nativist’ Occidentalism where there is a return *re-distribution*, *re-elaboration*, and “above all” a discourse (of which I have brought the “power cultural” most clearly into view for our purposes) that has more to do with “our” world than that of the Booktrust, for instance.

Mignolo would align this with the “Geopolitics of knowledge and of knowing” as “one of the responses from the Third World to the First World” (129). As he continues: “Anchored in the Third rather than in the First World the gaze changed direction. Now the First World, the place of the *humanitas*, became the object of observation and the unsuspecting subject of *critique* by the *Anthropos*” (my emphasis). With regards to this place from which one comes to know the world and with the ‘guardians of the literary’ more specifically, Peter D. McDonald in *The Literature Police* ends his work with a dictum that we must remain “eternally vigilant” (353).<sup>35</sup> He is speaking in the context of the Salman Rushdie *Satanic Verses* debacle here in South Africa, but, I would argue as what we see happening thus far with Duiker that we need to radicalize this vigilance to take account of the means by which our discipline, our works of art, and our writers are brought to quiescence. I will say only, as there is a great amount to be said and analysed here in terms of creative labour, funding, and co-option that it is not as Said

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<sup>35</sup> McDonald in a footnote directs the reader to Lee C. Bollinger and G. R. Stone, eds. *Eternally Vigilant: Free Speech in the Modern Era*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002.

says “some nefarious ‘Western’ imperialist plot” but rather a question of the “laws governing objective reality” as Lukács stated the authentic realist should aim to articulate. South African poet Kelwyn Sole who in a *New Coin* interview in 1994, has stated something particularly relevant to what has taken place here; here is the quote:

Movements and trends in art which are successful are driven, to misuse a quote from the science fiction writer Kim Stanley Robinson, 'at a level below intention'. They are fortuitous and often disorganised. You can influence the direction of a country's [or the Commonwealth's] art with cultural organisations, to a certain extent, through controlling and directing funding opportunities, but you cannot legislate or plan what forms of art and culture will emerge. Creation is a spontaneous process, even if it is dependent on social and economic circumstances and individual preparation and hard work; a process of - combustion? - dependent on contingent factors . . . I hope those in this country who have to make a business out of sitting at cultural desks and being fulltime organisers and planners don't get too great a rush of blood to the head about their own power or ability to differentiate or to be prophets. At best they can serve as clerks. (40)

Following the Commonwealth Prize, Duiker returned to South Africa to begin a career as a soap opera script writer, and later, as commissioning editor of drama for the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), for a period of six months. In 2004 he is said to have had a nervous breakdown. On January 19, 2005, at the age of 30, he committed suicide.

Charl Blignaut, a close friend and colleague to Duiker has stated in a *City Press* article that he “wasn’t a particularly brilliant soap writer, but once had an idea for a story” that included “visits from an ancestor” (n.p). The idea was successful and had an impact with the cast and crew. The idea, as Blignaut tells us relates to “the calling” and as he makes known this is concerned with “preparations to become a sangoma” or witch doctor as is generally understood. In opposition to Duiker’s love of, and interest in African tradition, is the work that he was doing for the SABC. As Blignaut tells us “he hated the job. . . hated where he found himself . . . with rent, a car payment, policies. . . He felt trapped by his lifestyle”.

Two weeks prior to Duiker’s suicide, Luvuyo Kakaza in his ‘Quiet Determination of a Novelist’ interview presents us with Duiker describing his daily routine: “‘A typical Duiker day is to be here from 9am until 5pm, with supper at around 6pm. Between 8pm and 10pm I sit on (sic) my desk and write. Even if is just thirty minutes. . . I hardly find time to read though. . .’” (24). In the four years following Duiker’s first two brilliant novels the *Hidden Star*, unfinished and published posthumously, is the only work of literary art to come from these



years of his life. I will pick up the thread of what I want to specifically say here concerning ‘authentic’ realism in the conclusion to the thesis. For the moment I want to make it known that despite the fact that Duiker found himself sitting at a popular cultural desk he was, as he states he tried to do in his spare time, still attempting to be a novelist and to thereby ‘disclose’ and develop a critique of mainstream reality.

The *Hidden Star* is a fully developed ‘alter-nativism’ in that it attempts to eschew, and is oppositional to, what Mignolo calls the “zero point epistemology”; which has amongst other things to do with the idea, that

Every way of knowing and sensing (feeling) that do not conform to the epistemology and aesthesis of the zero point are cast behind in time and/or in the order of myth, legend, folklore, local knowledge, and the like. Since the zero point is always in the present of time and the center of space, it hides its own local knowledge universally projected. Its imperialism consists precisely in hiding its locality, its geo-historical body location, and in assuming to be universal and thus managing the universality to which everyone has to submit. (80)

The ‘zero point’ is the central placeholder for the values and beliefs, the ways of knowing and of seeing, reality for the consciousness of the dominant culture in a society. In capitalist society it is the collective stance of the people subscribing to and being mediated to, albeit for the most part unconsciously, of the way of life that is necessary for the maintenance and oftentimes the optimization of capitalism’s functioning. As Said has pointed out following Gramsci, this is not necessarily overt but rather works through ‘consent’ through “the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons” (7).

Recall for just one moment the prejudice towards the authentic realism of San art in my previous chapter as a demonstration of Mignolo’s formulation that “every way of knowing and sensing (feeling) that do not conform to the epistemology and aesthesis of the zero point are cast behind. . .” Michel Weber describes this bias as “such artistic refinement” not being “possible for simian ‘primitives’” and the “paleolithic barbarity” (n.p.). Recall too from the present chapter that Murray felt no qualms in describing the underclass as being “barbarians” (Murray qtd. Cowling 235). The use of the word ‘barbarian’ points to a pervasive discourse that one still hears from world leaders such as when the US president Barack Obama in a speech in 2012 stated that when children are kidnapped into child soldiering and prostitution it is slavery and as he continues, it “is barbaric, and it is evil, and it has no place in a civilized

world”.<sup>36</sup> Yet, as Duiker or even Scorsese’s ‘authentic’ realism makes known we do not need to equate child prostitution, for instance, with what has happened in the ‘barbarous’ past because it is very much an issue existing *in* the ‘civilised’ world of today.

The important point for the argument that I am putting forward is that Duiker’s ‘alter-nativism’ to the ‘zero-point,’ which is to a lesser and greater extent a recurrent idea in all of his novels, is indeed, to reactivate other values and beliefs, ways of knowing and of seeing, for those who are forced into untenable ways of being alive on the margins of capitalist reality. The *Hidden Star*, by formally combining concrete ‘particular’ ‘lumpen’ existence with *not* fantasy, but African folklore, tradition, symbolism, local knowledge, and heritage offers at once a critique of the ‘zero point’ of our society but also a possible answer to it.

What I want to now take specifically forward from the phenomenon of Orientalism as worked out by Said is his assertion of the fundamental “*is*”. To give it substantive form in speech. Duiker in the closing lines of the assignment draft regarding his stance to the Commonwealth makes the following pronouncement: “Inside me there is an internal dialogue going on. All I can do is be open to it really, and hopefully it will feed into my writing” (10). This “internal dialogue” or what I am theorizing as his ‘alter-nativist’ viewpoint, together with Said’s “*is*” of ‘Orientalism’ and Mignolo’s ‘zero point’ can best be brought into view by way of an interview.

“*Hey, you there!*”

“*Are you talkin’ to me?*”

Fred de Vries, introducing his interview with Duiker in 2004, for the Dutch-based *de Volkskrant* speaks of the “writer as myth” and notes that unlike “J. D. Salinger”, “Paul Small”, and “William S. Burroughs” Duiker “nourishes the myth of the writer in another way”; as he continues:

First there is that unusual, carefully-construed name. In the South African context, where a name gives away skin colour and language, this is a significant move. It makes the writer elusive and expands his literary scope. K Sello Duiker. It sounds important. The floating K gives it an air of aristocracy. There’s something American

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<sup>36</sup> See Owen Jarus who also gives an historical analysis of the shifting meaning of the word ‘barbarian’: <http://www.livescience.com/45297-barbarians.html>

about it too, in the tradition of F Scott Fitzgerald. But what about Sello? And how does Duiker, an Afrikaans word, fit into the picture? (22)

There is much going wrong here and it is compounded by the fact that this is commentary inserted after the actual interview. As just one quick example of what I see as going wrong we might look at the statement “The floating K gives it an air of aristocracy”. Is “aristocracy” a good thing? Presented as it is here one would think that it naturally is. I wish simply to highlight amongst many other possible things that could be said just here but to which I will return in my conclusion in this section that de Vries brings to the table values and beliefs, ways of seeing and knowing the world from a ‘particular’ perspective. Suffice it to say that we will be bringing the dominant ‘zero-point’ as it demonstrates itself in the language into view in what follows, while at the same time, highlighting Duiker’s ‘alter-native’ resistance to it.

At one point in the interview de Vries describes the space in which the interview takes place (Rosebank Shopping Mall) as one which “has been wavering for years now between ‘chique’, trendy and decay. Lately it’s been trendy again” (23). These last comments by de Vries follow *directly after* Duiker’s explanation of the lived experience of where the idea for his debut novel *Thirteen Cents* actually came from! From street children and child prostitution, that is from individuals living within the social “decay” (to use de Vries’s idiom) who, because the mall is in a trendy stage, are unlikely to be there.

The comment by de Vries regarding the shopping mall and precedes a scathing commentary on the ‘aristocratic’ bearing and ‘orientalism’ of writers such as Zadie Smith, who, according to Duiker, at the Ghana ceremony for the Commonwealth Prize had “hoped to meet” her; but that, as Duiker continues,

Sadly, she didn’t come. People like Zadie find lions and giraffes more important.

They don’t pitch up if the event doesn’t take place in South Africa and if there’s no five star hotel involved. That’s why I loathe the literary world. Look, we are young writers and we would have liked to have met somebody like Zadie. (23)

This is a mature Duiker; unlike in his Booktrust assignments he is now being outspoken. To be sure Duiker’s *parole*, his singular speech acts, will more and more set him adrift from the monological imperatives of the interviewer.

Bakhtin in “Discourse in the Novel” which looks against orthodox stylistics, to the “social life of discourse” (Holquist 259) at one point speaks of the “extra-generic category of the ‘literary language’” which “is filled with a variety of concrete content” (381). As one “area of activity” of “literary language” Bakhtin notes the “language of socio-ideological genres (speeches of any kind, pronouncements, descriptions, printed articles, etc.)”. The interview by

de Vries for the *de Volkskrant* newspaper and its translation in *Bookworld* is thus within the parameters of this ‘extra’-genre.

Now, Bakhtin, whose interests extend beyond the specificity of this “extra-generic category,” – towards as Michael Holquist notes, the “belief system” (global or societal) and the “conceptual horizon” (individuals) – makes the following statement: “These new requirements [“general literariness”] serve to define, with great specificity, those who speak and those who write (in such cases, it motivates itself in this way: ‘thus should every respectable person think, talk, and write,’ or ‘every refined and sensitive man does thus and so . . . ,’ etc.)” (382-83). Bakhtin is presenting the “variety of cultural-ideological intentions” and the “profoundly diverse” forms and “concrete content[s]” (382) all of which serve as preservations for the dominant culture in language. I say ‘dominant culture’ specifically because I have an eye to Raymond Williams’s essay “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory” which we utilized in chapter one. Recall that Williams there stated that there is an indebtedness to Lukács’s principle of social ‘totality’ for an understanding of the Marxist “notion of social being determining consciousness” but that ‘totality’ needs ‘hegemony’ not to lose sight of ‘intention’ and ‘determination’ (“Base” 35-37). Bakhtin’s analysis of the ‘extra-generic’ with his focus on the “cultural ideological” and “concrete contents” is certainly speaking of the same processes of ‘hegemony’ and ‘determination’. Not to lead away from our discussion but rather to give substantive weight to what we are bringing into view I want to turn momentarily to a passage from Leo Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* as it perfectly describes the process of which we are speaking:

Stepan Arkadyevitch took in and read a liberal paper, not an extreme one but one advocating the views held by the majority. And in spite of the fact that science, art, and politics had no special interest for him, he firmly held these views on all these subjects which were held by the majority and by his paper, and he only changed them when the majority changed them-or, more strictly speaking, he did not change them, but they imperceptibly changed of themselves within him” (20).

What becomes interesting for us from here is the idea of the “single-image” at the “heart” of which “lies a certain *pose* of respectability, which it consistently assumes in all situations, vis-à-vis low reality” (385). Bakhtin continues:

The way of perceiving objects and expressions peculiar to this novelistic [opposed here to dialogism] discourse is not the ever-changing world view of a living and mobile human being, one forever escaping into the infinity of real life; it is rather the restricted world view of a man trying to preserve one and the same immobile pose, someone

whose movements are made not in order better to see, but quite the opposite—he moves so that he may turn *away* from, *not* notice, be distracted. This world view, filled not with real-life things but with verbal references to literary things and images, is polemically set against the brute heteroglossia of the real world and painstakingly (although in a deliberately polemical, and therefore tangible, way) cleansed of all possible associations with crude real life. (385)

A very clear example of this “immobile pose” can be seen in de Vries’s presentation to his readers of Duiker’s “tour de force” (23). Here is de Vries’s reading of Duiker’s novel:

**The quiet violence of dreams** . . . revolves around crazy people and homosexuality and is told from various perspectives. The author is a voyeur who goes everywhere and hears everything. He scours the streets of the city, mixes languages. He crawls under the skin of the paranoid Tshepo, whose mother was murdered by his gangster father and who ended up in an institution for his excessive drug abuse. Once declared cured, Tshepo hangs around the Cape homosexual subculture where the new South Africa bares itself literally and figuratively in all its dimensions.

The author transplants himself with great ease into Mmbatho, the best friend of Tshepo, who moves gracefully between the white and black worlds of Cape Town, her African heritage not forgotten, but also not a fanatical black nationalist. Gradually Duiker introduces his new characters, through which the reader is allowed peeks into the different Cape subcultures.

The synopsis will remain for the most part self-standing just now because I want to move to the heart of the matter as quickly as possible. Bakhtin’s emphasis on discourse would position de Vries’s summation as being located between ‘authoritative discourse’ and ‘internally-persuasive discourse’ (Holquist 424). The “crazy people” or “paranoid Tshepo” for instance – here Bakhtin’s “low reality” – is imbedded and suffused with meaning although it may not seem so at first glance.

I do not want to skew the argument being put forward only in favour of Duiker and we might pinpoint a relevant moment for our discussion where Duiker, although surrounded by some very critical commentary, allows at one stage an alien “belief system” to come through from his own “conceptual horizon” (Holquist 382). In describing his interest in violence and the way in which “violence is a culture that communicates a certain message” and which furthermore is a “kind of language” Duiker states the following:

Violence has made a lasting impression on me and not only in a negative way. It is a fascinating aspect of our culture and our heritage. I tried to see the message behind

it. Was it unadulterated barbarism, as the media would like to portray it, or does it have to do with another type of reality that Western culture just cannot grasp? (23-24).

The quotation is a fascinating one in terms of discourse because we at once have a clear expression of Duiker's 'alter-nativism' in "that Western culture just cannot grasp" but at the very same time the 'zero-point' as analysed in the previous section makes a clear appearance with the signifier "barbarism" and its negative denotation.

On the whole it is de Vries who through his 'immobile pose' and by looping and suspending Duiker's *parole* and "conceptual horizon" who will give us our clearest sighting of the 'zero-point,' even as Duiker attempts to combat it in the language. de Vries describes Duiker to his audience: "Duiker is the hybrid kid, the son of Joe who came to the hyper urban capital Johannesburg and who perforce left all his traditions behind . . . Duiker does not write to shock or push back frontiers" (24). We cannot transitively agree with this statement by de Vries. Duiker *does* "write to shock" and *does* "push back frontiers". The discursive coordinates are entirely at odds. Duiker will state: "Transgression is political and subjective. I on the other hand am interested in the human element, the social structures. That is what is missing in the post apartheid era; identifying the processes and trying to understand what is going on. How people integrate and live together". I will return to this realist statement of intent in the following section when we give a close reading from the *Quiet Violence* as it is a clear expression of his 'commitment' as a writer.

de Vries, after having presented to his readers Duiker's interest in "what is missing in the post apartheid era" follows with the following after which, once more, asymmetrically, Duiker will have his last words here; a last word demonstrating his search for an 'alter-native' view. I am putting it, at length, as it is found in the interview to give an indication of the discordant structure of the discourse and will thereafter use it for my summation:

Duiker researches. Duiker writes. In order to understand, and to understand more of what he cannot grasp. In order to discover his own identity. He recently followed a course to become a sangoma. 'I attended the course for two months,' he says. 'That is not enough to call yourself a sangoma. You have to go through four stages. But it did change me. It was an enriching experience and it gave me a better understanding of the past and of the culture that I as a township boy never *inherited*, as a result of the arrival of Joe in Jo'burg. *It is another reality altogether*, a communal experience. You go to the homelands, fetch water from the well. You wake up, you pray, you

meditate. It's very spiritual. You are cold and ill, you get visions. *Like a shaman*. It's got to do with healing. You can write about it. Writing is also a healing process.'

The last pieces of fruit disappear from his plate. 'I can't tell you every thing (sic), because there's a sacred aspect to it,' he adds in a secretive way. He smiles, and another mask appears before his face. All of a sudden he is again the sharp and wily publicity agent, the sly writer who nourishes the myth. (23; emphases are mine)

de Vries opened the interview for his readers with what I saw as a problematic introduction. As a framing device de Vries opened with the idea of the "writer as myth (22) and closes with "the sly writer who nourishes the myth" (23). At a central point in the interview he states the following: "bearing in mind the concept of mythologizing, Duiker reveals little about his own life and that of his protagonists" (23). Duiker is reported to have responded to this line of questioning with "'I regard my research as very important', is the only thing he wants to say about the matter. 'It's important to know what you are talking about'". To speculate according to what is available here for analysis we may understand de Vries to have developed the "concept of mythologizing" which he asks his readers to "bear in mind", exactly because he believes Duiker to have refrained from talking about "his own life and that of his protagonists".

The reason de Vries has introduced 'myth' is because of he is locked between an 'authoritative' and 'internally-persuasive' discourse. I will elaborate on this in just a moment. Duiker has in-fact spoken at length about the protagonist-to-life relation when he speaks about his sangoma and shaman experience. Let us make no mistake in this. Duiker has in the interview described in detail how *Thirteen Cents* came about and what his relation to 'Azure' was. I have also already given us a scene in which Azure 'articulates' the shamanistic. But it is the experiences of the *Quiet Violence* that de Vries is actually after. Tshepo in the *Quiet Violence*, has as a catalyst to all his experiences in that novel – including the "Cape subcultures" (23) – the need "to discover his own identity" as de Vries describes Duiker. But it is an authentic African identity. Tshepo, as I will later demonstrate, could not 'articulate' it. Duiker can.

To take my point home and to link it to what has been argued regarding the 'epistemology of the zero point' and 'alter-nativism', I will say one thing more. Duiker states that he went on a course to become a sangoma and that "It is another reality altogether" (23). Furthermore that "It was an enriching experience and it gave me a better understanding of the past and of the culture that I as a township boy never inherited, as a result of the arrival of Joe in Jo'burg" (23). de Vries will precede these statements by Duiker with the following commentary for his readers: "Duiker is the hybrid kid, the son of Joe who came to the hyper

urban capital Johannesburg and who perforce left all his traditions behind” (24). Duiker’s ‘alter-nativism’ is the re-activation and ‘articulation’ of these traditions in the present of time in the centre of capital. de Vries’s ‘zero point epistemology’ is his ‘immobile stance’. Recall Walter Mignolo on the “epistemology of the zero point”:

Every way of knowing and sensing (feeling) that do not conform to the epistemology and aesthesis of the zero point are cast behind in time and/or in the order of myth, legend, folklore, local knowledge, and the like. Since the zero point is always in the present of time and the center of space, it hides its own local knowledge universally projected. Its imperialism consists precisely in hiding its locality, its geo-historical body location, and in assuming to be universal and thus managing the universality to which everyone has to submit. (80)

“Every way of knowing and sensing . . . are cast behind in time [or] in the order of myth . . .”. Certainly we see exactly this process in action here on a very intimate level.

We have seen now the working of ‘the ‘zero point’ in reality. In the following section I would like us to take a closer look at Duiker’s ‘authentic’ realism and what he has stated from this interview as his intention and ‘commitment’ as a writer, namely, that “Transgression is political and subjective” but that he is “interested in the human element, the social structures. . . identifying the processes and trying to understand what is going on. How people integrate and live together” (24). We move now to an analysis of the little-known character Zebron in the *Quiet Violence* for the ‘typicality,’ “synthesis,” and ‘alter-nativism’ that he brings to view. As Duiker has advocated from his Commonwealth assignment this will be so as “to move around and widen our perspective” (10).

### *Inside*

Duiker opens Tshepo’s stay in the existent Valkenburg state psychiatric hospital<sup>37</sup> with the company that Tshepo now keeps and who are also given a “powerful anti-psychotic” and are

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<sup>37</sup> See: <<https://www.westerncape.gov.za/news/valkenberg-hospital-new-admission-unit>>. I ask that the reader please take note of Marius Fransman, Minister of Transport and Public Works for the Western Cape’s statement at the end here. For a useful historical analysis of the hospital, see: Sally Swartz and Johann Louw’s “An English Asylum in Africa: Space and Order in Valkenburg Asylum”. *History of Psychology* 4:1 (2001): 3-23. Swartz has also recently published *Homeless Wanderers: Movement and Mental Illness in the Cape Colony in the Nineteenth Century* (2015), with a Review available at: <<http://uctpress.bookslive.co.za/blog/2015/08/20/sally-swartzs-homeless-wanderers-movement-and-mental-illness-in-the-cape-colony-in-the-nineteenth-century-launched-at-the-book-lounge/>>.



described as people who “walk around like zombies as if their minds are bent beyond repair” (19). Intersubjectivity is in this way hampered as when Tshepo states that “Conversation with them is fractured, if not impossible” and that “Some grunt or bump me when they have anything to say to me”. The lack of sociality overridden as it is by the medicinal is given further expression and presented by Duiker as “They look like they’re just getting by, like people who have given up living. And their posture betrays this, it’s all wrong. They’re slumped forward and their backs are arched as if beckoning the earth, beckoning death . . . I feel imprisoned by their lack of hospitality and their lousy company” (19).

Duiker has stated that he was influenced by Bessie Head’s *A Question of Power*<sup>38</sup>, and that it is “what made him want to become a writer” (Khumalo 23). As Duiker continues, “Here is this person [Bessie Head] who was rejected by her community and took refuge wherever she could. I related to that, to her trying to find her feet”. The *Madness and Literature Network* makes the following known: “In *A Question of Power* mental turmoil is seen as a journey to knowledge” and that “What holds” the protagonist in Head’s novel “Elizabeth together throughout her madness is her conviction that her victim position grants her knowledge of the functions and mechanisms of power” (Jäntti. N. pag.). This is not the full story given in the review but it is enough to springboard us towards Zebron who takes a type of “Sello” orientation as in *A Question of Power*. We will explore Zebron’s “victim position” as Duiker does as well use it as a means to disclose “the functions and mechanisms of power” and resistance to it. As the site review states, and which may bring some clarity for us just here, “Sello subjects her [sic] atrocities of human history” in much the same way that Zebron will act as an immanent historical voice in the *Quiet Violence*. Our introduction to Zebron, by Tshepo, is worthy of note:

His name is Zebron, if you can believe that is actually someone’s name, and he makes me anxious with his dark torturer’s eyes. . . . But what is strangest about him is that he doesn’t really have a face. He’s got these nondescript features that remind me of a police identikit. An identikit never looks like anyone one would meet in real life. Apart from a low brow with deepset (sic) eyes, Zebron has a forgettable face.

His face would make him the perfect criminal. (20)<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> This has been referenced in various places but de Vries notes the influence in his interview as, “His literary models are Bessie Head, Dambudzo Marechera, Ben Okri, Zadie Smith” (24).

<sup>39</sup> Incidentally, the cover for the first edition of the *Quiet Violence* which I am using has a non-descript silhouette of a male figure fitting this description; there is also a bottle neck with burnt matches at the left-hand forehead connoting marijuana smoking. This differs significantly from the more innocuous second edition, Dutch and French translation covers.

The criminal/mental correlation – offset decisively with “What are we supposed to do if we cannot laugh at the inappropriateness of being locked up like criminals?” – is taken further as when Tshepo states that “Among the other patients he commands the kind of respect reserved for gang leaders in prison. It makes me wonder who he was before he came here.” One of the key aspects of Duiker’s characterization of Zebron is that he allows the reader to gain access to an individual who would otherwise be simply classed as a ‘crazy’ person within the ‘lumpen’. The fact that we hear the personal history of Zebron, plays into that idea I spoke of in the first chapter in that it is important to not merely ‘lump’ individuals into classes, especially the ‘underclass’ as Murray wanted of us, as this is to belie the social and economic forces that have placed them in this extreme marginal position in the first place. “Everyone has a history in Valkenburg,” Tshepo continues, “Doctors, lawyers, accountants, artists, forgotten politicians – they live *anonymously* in Valkenburg but you seldom hear the history from the patient” (20, 21 emphasis is mine). And at another point, to repeat the nebulous character of those now living ‘lumpen’ realities: “We once had lives. We were once respected professors, esteemed teachers and students, inspired architects, skilful accountants, vigilant policemen, hardworking labourers, married husbands and contributing citizens” (61). Anyone from a labourer all the way through to a politician can thus be said to be able to enter the ‘lumpen.’<sup>40</sup>

Zebron “has a history” but not as a “contributing citizen” and to present Zebron’s ‘lumpen’ history as a Lukácsian ‘type’ is exactly what Duiker does as a “specific particularity” (Lukács qtd. Tanoukhi 671). The anonymity of appearance that characterizes Tshepo’s first impression of this character is thus lifted by Duiker who gives Zebron a definitive voice and thereby activates the ‘authentic’ realist mode so as to move beyond the surfaces to the underlying forces of production. In terms of causality this becomes incredibly important for a “dispersion of the type back into the social plurality from which it is sprung” as Nirvana Tanoukhi in his “The Movement of Specificity” essay so eloquently describes it (Woloch qtd. Tanoukhi 672). Tanoukhi in this description has, I believe, given ‘articulation’ to the synecdoche function of the ‘authentic’ realist method. To bring ‘particularity’ to individuals within the ‘lumpen’ is a way to better reflect on their specific positioning and importantly, the reasons for this positioning, on the extreme margins. The individuation between Zebron and the later Chris Swart exemplify what I mean here.

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<sup>40</sup> Marx, although obliquely, has noted this fact in the *Brumaire*: “From the aristocracy there were bankrupted roués of doubtful means and dubious provenance, from the bourgeoisie there were degenerate wastrels on the take . . .” (63).

When Tshepo first arrives at Valkenburg Zebron very purposefully antagonizes him. After having scared Tshepo with a “raw shaving blade” and Tshepo is dragged “off to seclusion” (the “kulukutz”: used as behavioural punishment (21)), Zebron states “I’m simply making sure that we are all equally disadvantaged. A few hypochondriacs have come through this ward and my experience with them has always been unpleasant” (22). Zebron thus initially believes Tshepo to be someone looking for attention and want to scare him into a state of being “equally disadvantaged”. Tshepo, after again being antagonised by Zebron, in plain view and with full knowledge from the staff, “laughs, inappropriately” and on further antagonism by way of a taunt regarding “More white pills for you,” Tshepo “tells [him] to fuck off and stabs [him] on the side of the abdomen with his spoon” (22). “I don’t strike back” Zebron states easily. Tshepo is then once more sent to the “kulukutz” and “stays there for five nights. On the second day we hear him screaming something awful. It lasts for a while before they sedate him”. The nature of the “kulukutz” experience is described in detail by Zebron:

Seclusion can do that to a person. It chokes you. Once the screaming starts I know that the spirit has been forcibly evacuated. . . . There is nothing spiritual or healing about the kulukutz. The door is heavy and they bolt it as though you are a dangerous beast that no one should see. . . . The room oppresses you with frustration. There is a feeling of interminable doom about it. It is hellishly lonely in there. And the blankets and mattress always stink of urine and crawl with fleas. (23)

“There is nothing spiritual or healing” it is discipline and punishment and Zebron articulates what he understands to be its dehumanizing quality with “as though you were a dangerous beast”. This reduction to animality is important and we will see further along that this is not the only time Zebron will speak in dehumanizing terms such as this. At another point for instance, Zebron’s second psychologist will state, “Well, the first step to recovery is speaking properly. You’re not an animal, for God’s sake” (117).

Zebron in his determination to force reactions out of Tshepo considers himself as a more experienced helper, as when he explains: “He had to break down. There is no other way for them to advance his recovery. Before they mend you they have to break you” (23). As for Zebron, Duiker weaves his personal history very subtly into the narrative. With regards to the psychiatric hospital and the “break[ing] down” of Tshepo he states that he “know[s] this because I have been in and out of hospitals for years. I should have never let my brother cajole me into going in the first time nearly ten years ago. I feel more broken now than when I first came in”. This is an incredibly important statement by Zebron because it relates to the very nature of my argument in the third chapter on the ‘floating kingdom’. I prefigure and highlight

for the reader that Zebron was coerced, or “cajoled” to use the slang word, to enter into the psychiatric hospital. Tshepo too will have entered the hospital by way of coercion by other people as I will go on to prove at the appropriate time.

To return to our analysis here, Zebron’s reasons for going “in and out of hospitals” remain in the shade but even in the shade sight is possible. We do at one stage have the following which is very telling: “Most days I’m just content that in here at least I have three regular meals and a place to put my head at night. Ja, it’s lousy in here but it’s worse out there if anyone asks me” (49). Zebron is hereby stating that he finds existence in this segment of the ‘lumpen’ to be more bearable than being ‘outside’ and if we look to *Thirteen Cents* and the social realities played out there we can understand why this is. “Ma Brooks”, the named second psychologist to Zebron will remark, ““You should be more concerned that you’re still here than about me smiling”” (116). The ‘zero point,’ the ‘universal’ projection of knowing and seeing the world from the centre outwards and thereby moving any other way of knowing and seeing to the margins is once more in our sight. But, Zebron, like Tshepo, will resist the ‘zero point’ with an ‘unarticulated’ and grasping ‘alter-nativism’. We will work through this idea by looking at the production by Duiker of a resistant discourse as it shows itself through Zebron’s characterization.

Other than the psychologists, Zebron will have this to say about the staff at Valkenburg: “I’m very aware of how twisted my thinking can be. I mean sometimes I catch myself fantasizing about bludgeoning the female nurses – the stupid ones always gossiping about someone’s indaba. I wonder what I would use. A spade or a golf club?” (24) The class symbolism in the “spade or golf club” carries significant socio-economic critique and is an antagonism pervasive throughout Zebron’s thinking as it is presented to the reader. As to the doctors of Valkenburg, Zebron makes known:

Sometimes I just refuse to communicate for days on end. It’s the last act of protest I can still control. I think the doctors see it as a sign of deterioration and just cause for increasing my dosage. The arseholes – if only they knew what arrogant pompous shits they seem like from my side. They sit there in their immaculately white coats taking apart aspects of my life and then reconstructing them in a form they call therapy. And when I don’t respond to their therapy they never stop and question if their methods are effective. Instead they punish me by making me stay longer or increasing the medicine. It’s always about me and never about them. (24)

Zebron’s resistance is silence. Silence then is a way for him to be able to resist the universality and the management of the ‘universality’ of the ‘zero point’ as it exists in language. Silence

also denotes the fact that there is no properly formalized counter-discursive system of signification for Zebron to utilize as a form of resistance to the ‘zero point’ of language’s functioning. The ‘zero point’ gaze to which Zebron is referring, the “It’s always about me” makes Zebron feel that he is reduced to a type of “lab experiment” (24) and he is therefore in a state of perpetual mental rebellion against the “arrogant pompous shifts” (24).

Zebron’s ‘particular’ concrete and perspective as we have it here is aligned to Mignolo’s “Geopolitics of knowledge and of knowing” as “one of the responses from the Third World to the First World” (129). As Mignolo continues: “Anchored in the Third rather than in the First World the gaze changed direction. Now the First World, the place of the *humanitas*, became the object of observation and the unsuspecting subject of *critique* by the *Anthropos*” (my emphasis). In less theoretical and broad terms (“First” and “Third” world) but in no less a political register, the intimate psychologist/patient dichotomy, is through the focus on Zebron’s point of view, the “gaze chang[ing] direction” and an ‘articulation’ by Duiker, as I am arguing, of the ‘alter-nativist’ critique.

Zebron’s is not the only – or an isolated – point of view that produces critique of the “First” and as I will demonstrate later the protagonist of the *Quiet Violence* is actually all about changing the ‘gaze’ and opening a new relation of ‘third’ looking critically at the ‘first’. For now the immediate congruency here between the two characters is that both feel intensely the observational nature of the clinical environment that they are forced to inhabit. But, the determinant conjugation, the two ‘I’s’ coalescing in the story takes place, as Emile Benveniste elaborates in his “Subjectivity in Language”, outside the “Consciousness of self [which] is only possible if it is experienced by contrast” and by which means the subject is situated in language, when, the “description of the same state in common” finds utterance and “formal alignment” (224-228).<sup>41</sup> That both *suffer*, that both are distinctly autonomous elements in the substratum, and that neither have anything to do with either “spade” nor “golf club” brings them into unity; whereof they cannot speak. Duiker, however, does try to speak. The differences between Zebron and Tshepo comes about most clearly in the repulsion and attraction that takes place in thought and interaction between these two characters against/for one another and then, their socio-economic environment; all of which is given in narrative structure, but also voice.<sup>42</sup> Zebron at one point reflects, concerning Tshepo: “That’s why I can never truly like someone

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<sup>41</sup> Benveniste uses, as one example “*I suffer, you suffer, he suffers*” to show the way in which the “conjugated verb form” does not change with changes in person (228).

<sup>42</sup> The same “*aufheben*” can be seen to be operative between Tshepo/ Mmabatho and Tshepo/Chris and their interaction.

like him. He reminds me too much of the distance between us, the gulf that seems to stretch forever” (50). The immense difference and polarization between the two ‘I’s’ here (Tshepo/Zebon) finds “formal alignment” in their immanent ‘lumpen’ and reifying conscious experience in an institutional space.

Zebon, at a stage, and under constant psychological bombardment, slips. “At the last ward round I swore at my psychologist when he asked me how I felt about leaving Valkenburg” This takes place only out of pure frustration and as he continues:

I swore at him because I knew they were planning to keep me longer. I’m always difficult with them because they are so convinced that I am sick and only they can help me. Sometimes, not often, the grip of depression gets so tight that you feel you must tell these arseholes something because the pain is too unbearable. I’ve told my psychologist that I killed someone. I don’t think he believes me because they say I suffer from schizophrenia.

Now, the truth of this matter makes itself clear, in therapy, while with his unnamed first psychologist. The fact that this psychologist is unnamed but the second psychologist (Ma Brooks) has been, is in effect an authentic realist strategy by Duiker to universalize this character as a type.

The interactions with the psychologist are described as “difficult sessions because I make things hard for him by refusing to communicate much” (40). I reiterate for what follows now that silence is Zebon’s main ‘alter nativist’ defence. Previous to this Zebon states that “When they say you’re psychotic, it’s still you but in an intense state. When you start seeing things like that, you become more open to the nastier side of life. . . . I have my stories to tell. But they won’t be heard by some God-fearing psychologist who thinks he’s my saviour” (25). The introduction of “God-fearing” and “saviour” marks the central focus point of discursive resistance to the psychologist by Zebon. Zebon states that “when you begin seeing things like that, you become more open to the nastier side of life” in reference to the classification of “psychotic” and although there is much work to be done here on the critique of the ‘zero point’ of psychological and psychiatric epistemology I want to work with Zebon’s reasoning for saying “nastier”.

We see once more that the ‘zero point,’ the values and beliefs, ways of knowing and seeing the world as I’m arguing is actually a pervasive form of interaction between individuals from the dominant or ‘first’ culture and those in ‘lumpen’ realities. In the interaction between the “God-fearing psychologist” and Zebon – who is uncertainly characterised as being

mentally ill by Duiker – we have the dynamics of the ‘zero point’/‘alter-native’ confrontation. The unnamed doctor is described by Zebron as

You can tell he’s happy, that he thinks much of life. It’s [sic] shows in the way he dresses, in the things he says to encourage me to speak. He’s always sunny with the persistence of a tenacious Chihuahua. I don’t blame him for my problems but he makes an easy target for dislike” (40-41).

Duiker has purposefully left the fact of whether or not Zebron plays the psychopathic role in ambiguity: ““I don’t like flies”” (43) he will continuously tell the psychologist but we only hear this type of *parole* when it has to do with a meeting between them. ““I was telling you about the flies,”” he says to the psychologist irritatingly and which is then immediately qualified in address to the reader as “I say distractedly. I get worked up easily and I hate the way my thoughts get scattered when I’m angry” (43). There are also “people” as in the following:

‘The flies they’re everywhere?’ I tell him, they’re little messengers, little spies.

People are always watching.

‘Which people?’ [the psychologist] asks almost bored.

‘Them down there,’ I say and point to the ground.

‘What do you mean down there?’ Some people shouldn’t be allowed to open their mouths.

This last statement, “down there” connotes ‘hell’ and also relates to the resistance through silence that he utilizes being wished upon his opponent: “Some people shouldn’t be allowed to open their mouths”. Where he is being asked to elucidate on his thoughts by the unnamed psychologist the psychologist is also being purposefully antagonistic and for reasons that will become more apparent. ““Don’t you know anything?”” he continues, ““They’re listening, you know? They want to hear what we’re talking about. And then later when you’re not here they’re going to ask me to do bad things,’ I say and laugh. ‘I’m used to them”” (43). The “laugh” is Zebron posturing with the psychologist. In actuality, Zebron feels isolated and is affected by the constant ‘gaze’:

In the afternoon I see my psychiatrist and he gives me my weekly injection. . . . And when I’m alone with my thoughts I can see who I am and not feel scared. I can look around me and not feel persecuted all the time, always wondering who is watching me. (45)

Zebron continuously positions himself in an extreme antagonism to the ‘zero point’, as is expressed in the following:

For some of us it is not enough that we suffer, we must become suffering so that there should be religion and prayers and clergymen bent to the insular will of God. So that doctors and psychologists and silly people who think they're doing us a favour can congratulate themselves tirelessly, their deeds religious instalments for the next paradise. So that people can sleep safe at night when they rest because the really sick people are locked away while they snore peacefully. (46)

The cynicism is very much marked and the instantiation of "the insular will of God" can be seen as an identification of the 'zero point' but an inability to formulate a clearly formulated discursive resistance to it other than, as I will show, in binary terms which Zebron utilizes as the only other means of resistance than silence.

After the tension of Zebron's confession of murder and rape the psychologist remarks: "I think you're evil," he finally says, 'not because I think you killed someone but because you have no feeling, no compassion. What do you think?'" (42). The "finally" here is telling and Zebron goes on to relate that "He looks at me with the intensity of someone who genuinely doesn't like me. He's never done that before – opening up like that". The remark by the psychologist provokes Zebron into the elusive "Everyone has a history in Valkenburg" and Zebron in giving blame a place to rest goes on to narrate how his "father" a "tsotsi" (criminal) would "get poep drunk until he passed out"; how the family would beat the father when he was unconscious and how he, Zebron, would rape his sister, who he describes as "Rattex" (43) when "no one was at home" (42). In concluding this segment of his personal history Zebron, not having any way to 'articulate' himself, which is to say any language from which to draw upon for his own 'lumpen' experience and 'alter-native' view, can only take a dichotomous stance to the psychologist. In this way the metaphysical terminology of the 'zero point' as 'good and evil' is the only way that Zebron's encounter with the value-judgment of "evil" can be resisted. Even in utilizing and internalizing the 'zero point' discourse Zebron will be resistant: "So don't tell me about evil, it's always been there. I never invited it" (43).

Zebron after finally giving enunciation to his past asks the psychologist "Why are you looking at me like that? Like you're looking at a dog, man. I'm not stupid!" I yell and slam my hand on the table" (44). The reply from the psychologist is a repetitive one: "I don't like you but this is my job," he tells me finally, battling to restrain his irritation with me. 'You are too cold even to be called mentally sick'. To this Zebron replies, "I like you better when you're honest" and the retort to this from the psychologist is "No, you don't, you thrive on conflict" (44). The "evil" and "cold" are internalized by Zebron to unfolding but also immediate reactionary changes in his cognitive outlook. The once stubborn silence now, after this crux,



gives way to a torrent of vocalization and a “formal alignment” (Benveniste 224-228) concerning care for others who, although different and from different ‘lumpen’ experiences, are in the same position as Zebron. In the narrative it is after this exchange that a change of attitude towards Tshepo begins.

Zebron says to the psychologist, ““You people don’t realise what it means to be here. . . . You think just because I know how to talk properly you can do something with my mind. I know how you guys work. Why isn’t anyone helping Unathi?””(44). The reply given is ““Because we don’t have a psychologist who can speak Xhosa for the moment,” he explains”. Zebron by stating this concern for Unathi is overcoming the isolation he feels and is allowing the ‘I’ to find coalescence with others so as to form a ‘We’. Duiker in the *Quiet Violence* will continuously have his protagonist look for a community and articulate the inability of those in ‘lumpen’ realities to fit, or maintain, relations to those who gravitate more towards association with the ‘zero point’ than any ‘alter-nativist’ view of the world.

Concerning Unathi and the cultural criticism<sup>43</sup> opened up in this exchange between Zebron and the unnamed psychologist, it is a meta-elaborative ‘alter-native’ activation by Duiker that points to some very pertinent psychosocial and environmental problems specific to the ‘zero point’ of a highly racialized apartheid and post-apartheid specific context. There is in this, and although I am being oblique, a question being begged as to what Enlightenment is now, here? In terms of an unfolding affective care for others, Zebron at this stage in the narrative begins opening up to Tshepo, beginning with “I don’t speak to anyone here except Tshepo” (46) and he goes so far as to admit to him that he is “married” (48) but not so far as to admit that he is also a “father” (50). Zebron’s thoughts, descriptions and analysis of Tshepo now reflect a flip of the early twenty-something cents in that he does not merely see him as a “hypochondriac” to negatively antagonise but rather as someone to positively, much like a brother, guide: “I’m helping the poor bastard. I want him to get out” (51) the reader is told. “There is a life to live out there, even if it means getting into deeper shit but at least he should go out there”. These then are not the thoughts of someone “evil” and “cold”.

Zebron does however continue to “ruffle his feathers” (48) but does so for a very specific reason as he is trying to help Tshepo who is oblivious of the ‘dangerous class’ of the ‘lumpen’ life-world. “People like Tshepo” Zebron muses, “make perfect targets . . . He’s the

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<sup>43</sup> Some other pertinent criticisms here, levelled against the American Psychiatric Association’s (APA) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* specifically, include “the use of dividing lines between categories and from ‘normality’ . . . and the medicalization of human distress”. See: <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diagnostic\\_and\\_Statistical\\_Manual\\_of\\_Mental\\_Disorders#DSM-IV-TR\\_.282000.29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diagnostic_and_Statistical_Manual_of_Mental_Disorders#DSM-IV-TR_.282000.29)> for an axis point into this contested and controversial arena.

kind of person likely to believe that kingdoms are won on dreams, that behind every opportunity lies a diamond of knowledge” (50). As against this idealization Zebron states “My anger and pain are too real, when I take medicine the side effects of constipation are too real. No bumper sticker philosophies help me through difficult moments.” For Zebron it is important and “makes my life easier to know who my enemies are, who will betray me, he says (sic)” (50-51). “But the truth” he continues concerning Tshepo, “is he doesn’t know who his enemies are. They’re almost always a step ahead of him because he’s so trusting. No real good comes of anyone foolishly trusting. Life is too stingy. It makes you work” (51). The foreshadowing of the character Chris here is important in terms of ‘lumpen’ intersubjectivity and opens out onto some of the central concerns of *Thirteen Cents* and *The Hidden Star*. Zebron who knows that Tshepo doesn’t like him but which “doesn’t bother [him]” and as he explicates “It’s not important to me. People put too much faith and importance in each other. I’m not looking for a best friend or a soul mate, just someone to help pass the time . . . . We are sitting in the lounge during OT and the TV doesn’t work” (46). The insinuation is that “OT” (occupational therapy) is a space in which to try and waste time but this nonchalance by Zebron towards Tshepo changes as the narrative develops and Zebron develops as an individual.

The who that Tshepo is, finds further ‘articulation’ by way of an extended comparison – made in brother-framed terms by Zebron – between Tshepo and the character Byron, with whom Tshepo “Smoke[s] ganja in the toilets” (51) and with whom Tshepo escapes Valkenburg (56). Important to note concerning this ‘brother’ is that Zebron, on Tshepo’s return to Valkenburg and his wondering “‘what happened to Byron’ he says as though that would give him comfort” (118) makes the following commentary: “‘Ja, Byron. I heard that his drug-dealing chommies [friends] got him caught up with the Nigerians in Jo’burg. They say he came back to Cape Town in a body bag.’ I sit back and shrug my shoulders. I couldn’t give a shit about Byron”. Zebron’s I “couldn’t give a shit” demonstrates that he does not care for those who align themselves with the ‘dangerous class’ of the ‘lumpen,’ on the one hand, but it is also a means to instil in Tshepo an understanding of the world he may need to confront and the stance he will need to adopt, once leaving hospital. Tshepo is too unknowledgeable and inexperienced of the ‘lumpen’ life-world that requires a consciousness of the dangers to be found there. Tshepo’s response is one of agog: “‘I can’t believe it. Byron said things were looking up. He said he was going places,’ he says gravely”. To this Zebron states, “‘Byron said

a lot of things. But he was just another outie [homeless person<sup>44</sup>] like you and me. He was just a windgat [braggart], you check?’ The bell for mid-morning tea rings but he doesn’t bother to go to the line” (118).

I would argue that this interlude “for mid-morning tea” is deeply important. It is the “smell of tea” after all that “wakes [him] from the quiet violence of a dream” (110) and later *while having tea* with Mmbatho at a restaurant called “A Touch of Madness” he will go on to tell the truth of his harrowing personal history (74-80). ‘Tea’ therefore acts as a conceit-signifier for those moments in the text that are of immeasurable importance. In this regard and certainly at “mid-morning tea” the idea of time and its routinization is brought to view and is paramount to an understanding of the procedures and processes of modernity in Western society more generally. “Time moves slowly in a mental hospital” (59) Tshepo has already informed us and what is more is this is understood as a method of therapy that “forces you to think about things, to scrutinize the events that make up your life”. Inside, Tshepo in his forced therapeutic contemplation thinks thus:

Every once in a while, a long while, I feel the real warmth of the sun when I go outside. And suddenly the sky is not so far from me. And there is music in the way people walk, in the whisper between plants. In the air that carries so many secrets, so many conversations and messages. Is anyone listening? Does anyone feel the frenetic pace we’re going at? Does anyone hear the music of madness? It is a frequency above the humdrum of living and above the conspiracy of satellites and clandestine societies. People are doing secret things while we lie awake at night. They are plotting to take over the world. They are stealing our dreams, preying on our hopes and doing terrible things in the name of God.

I’ve become deeply suspicious of life. Matthew jokes and says that is the occupational hazard of being a mental patient. (61)

And, as a mental patient, delegitimized, he may no longer be taken seriously but we may understand that Tshepo’s ‘alter-nativism’ continues to struggle to find ‘articulation’ despite being institutionalized and branded as being “crazy” and what is more, Duiker’s counter-modernity and counter-rationalist critique is undeniable. “A flitting glance can open another universe” (61) Tshepo muses. Zebron is but one of the characters through which “another

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<sup>44</sup> According to *Oxford Dictionaries* online: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/outie> who also use as a sentence example “‘a hardened outie becomes resigned to sleeping in shop doorways’”.

universe” of the inside is opened for us in the *Quiet Violence* but it is through Tshepo, Azure, and Nolitye that the potential for an ‘outside’ one becomes possible.

In this section I have given concrete shape to the codified ‘zero point’/‘alter-native’ perspectives, or world views, as it finds expression in Duiker’s authentic literary realism. In the chapter that follows we will now bring ‘articulation’ and ‘value’ into the frame in order to underpin in theory, particularly semiological and Lacanian poststructural theory, the way in which the ‘zero point’ of language works.

### **Part Three: Floating Kingdom**

#### **Outside is Already Inside the Language**

One seldom inspects the cellars of a house after visiting its salons,  
and when one eats the fruit of a tree, one cares but little about its root.

- Victor Hugo *Preface to Cromwell* (para. 3)

A home is never far away when you believe in it

- K. Sello Duiker *The Hidden Star* (233)

### *Articulation and not Representation*

The ‘semiotics’ of Charles Sanders Pierce is not the same as the ‘semiology’ of Ferdinand de Saussure. The difference is fundamental and takes as its central incommensurability what is perceived to be the inability of Saussure to “theorise the referent” (Ogden and Richard; Deely qtd. Daylight n.p. [9]). It is the much vaunted ‘arbitrariness of the sign’ where the detraction from Saussure for a “model for a general semiotics” most assuredly comes. Russell Daylight impugns this concentration with a reminder from the *Course in General Linguistics* itself as to what is central for Saussure’s semiological analysis:

Everything we have said so far comes down to this. *In the language itself, there are only differences*. Even more important than that is the fact that, although in general a difference presupposes positive terms between which the difference holds, in a language there are only differences, *and no positive terms*. Whether we take the signified or the signifier, the language includes neither ideas nor sounds existing prior to the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonetic differences arising out of that system. In a sign, what matters more than any idea or sound associated with it is what other signs surround it. (Saussure qtd. Daylight [9])

The intra-linguistic and differential nature of signification, progresses then to the necessity of a “distinction” between ‘value’ and ‘meaning’ for Saussure. The distinction between these two terms, (which we may add recurs to the idea of difference) is that ‘value’ is concerned with the “interplay of all the elements in a semiological system” [10]. Moreover, as Saussure states: “The content of a word is determined in the final analysis not by what it contains but by what exists outside it. As an element in a system, the word has not only a meaning but also – above all – a value”.

Daylight brings to the fore the thought of Samuel Weber as to the “gesture” and “originality” of Saussure’s movement here in semiological theory away from language function as ‘representation’ where “precisely, representation in the sense of a substitute, proxy, deputy, or stand-in” is understood. The “‘arbitrariness of the sign’” aligned with the “theory of linguistic value” by Saussure (as this last is set out above) is where he is seen to be most ‘radical’. Where, for Weber, Saussure’s true “originality” can be found is not in “what the sign is – a concrete linguistic *entity*” but rather in “how it *works*” and that this then “coincides with his introduction of the notion of ‘linguistic value’” [11]. Importantly, Daylight notes that Saussure “calls language ‘a system of pure values,’” and that linguistic value “puts into doubt all previous assurances of meaning, as found in its relationship with reality”. The freeing of the

sign from its bond to classical theory as representation and the arbitrary referential designation to meaning allows this “how it *works*” to become a more radical undertaking that leads to the question of ‘articulation’.

As Daylight relays for us from Weber: “after Saussure, signification is no longer an act of representation – with its implication of substitution or standing for – but an act of articulation” and that also there is a suggestion in Weber that “Saussure’s theory of linguistic value determines that the relationship between the signifier (which is no longer equivalent to a ‘sign’) and the signified (which is no longer equivalent to a ‘referent’) is not one of representation, not of standing-for, but of articulation” [12].

In the same way that Saussure was to move from “what the sign is” to ‘linguistic value’ he also now moves from a definition of articulation –

In Latin, the word *articulus* means “member, part, subdivision in a sequence of things.” As regards language, articulation may refer to the division of the chain of speech into syllables, or to the division of the chain of meanings into meaningful units. [13]

– into the chapter “Linguistic Value” and this definition of articulation by Saussure is also directly preceded by a definition of semiology: the “science which studies the role of signs as part of *social* life” [my emphasis]. The relation between authentic realism and Saussurean semiology come together for us now with the idea of ‘articulation’ and ‘participation’. Let the reader be reminded here that authentic literary realism is often erroneously understood to be a mere surface reflection of reality; that in its representational and referential function, from an orthodox and naïve perspective, is merely concerned with appearances. This is not true.

The question of ‘value’ in Saussure’s definition as “the interplay of all elements in a semiological system” [10] has its correlative in authentic literary realism. As Raymond Williams noted the “active element” of realism is a “conscious commitment to understanding and describing real forces (a commitment that at its best includes understanding the processes of consciousness and composition that are involved in any such attempt)” (262), or as Lukács has theorized, the realist is able “to penetrate the laws governing objective reality and to uncover the deeper, hidden, mediated, not immediately perceptible network of relationships that go to make up society” (*Aesthetics* 38). The “interplay” of which Saussure speaks and which constitutes authentic realism is exactly the same as that which we see at work in Duiker in that through his ‘conscious commitment,’ to “describing real events and showing things as they exist” (Williams 259) we are able to see the ‘interplay’ of individuals within the *social* system.

And what becomes important in this is “what other signs surround it” (Saussure qtd. Daylight [9]). The ‘interplay’ can therefore be subtly antagonistic as between Duiker and de Vries in the interview in Chapter Two. There, there is the attempt to circumscribe ‘alter-nativist’ ‘value,’ through ‘zero point’ ‘orientalism’. Let me be clear here in giving the example of the sign “myth” that de Vries employed as a motif in that interview, and which relegates the ‘alter-nativism’ and in particular the signs deployed by Duiker (“sangoma . . . spiritual . . . visions . . . shaman . . . healing”) (23), as Mignolo states happens with the projection and universalizing tendency of the ‘zero point,’ to the “order of myth” (80). In response to Duiker stating ““I can’t tell you every thing (sic) because there’s a sacred aspect to it,”” de Vries’s commentary for his audience will be: “. . . [Duiker] adds in a secretive way. He smiles, and another mask appears before his face. All of a sudden he is again the sharp and wily publicity agent, the sly writer who nourishes the myth” (23). Here are some of the signs that surround “myth” for de Vries: “secretive . . . mask . . . wily . . . sly”. Saussure, as Daylight remarks on, quite rightly “calls language ‘a system of pure values,’ and that linguistic value “puts into doubt all previous assurances of meaning, as found in its relationship with reality” [11]. It is what surrounds each sign that is important and here we have the “linguistic value” of two “systems of pure value” colliding with one another.

In authentic literary realism the ‘interplay’ of ‘linguistic value’ helps to “uncover those simple and terrible laws which, be they seen or unseen, pervade and govern” as Williams pointed to by his use of Emerson (Emerson qtd. 259). With my analysis of Zebron from the *Quiet Violence* in the previous chapter we saw the grasping of this character for a system of signification with which to defend himself against the unnamed psychologist whose set of references were in such stark contrast to his own experiences of reality that he was reduced, initially, to silence. Recall just here that Daylight has highlighted the fact that “after Saussure, signification is no longer an act of representation – with its implication of substitution or standing for – but an act of articulation” [12]. So too with ‘authentic’ realism. Zebron is not an isolated sign in the *Quiet violence* but has ‘value’ with Tshepo, or is surrounded by Tshepo in contradistinction to the other signs/characters, as both characters form points of axis for Duiker’s ‘alter-nativism’. They are not representations of another view of the world, or lumpen existences, or even “crazy people” and “drug abuse[rs]” (23) as de Vries describes Zebron and Tshepo, but rather fully developed ‘articulations’ of linguistic (semiological) and social (‘authentic realist’) ‘value’.



### *The Double Phenomenon and Articulation*

The Language (*langue*) for Roland Barthes in the *Elements of Semiology* is one at the same time a “social institution” and a “system of values” (14). As to the former language is bounded in processes of ‘naturalization’ and one is born into it as much as it is a “collective contract” where “the individual cannot by himself either create or modify it”. We need only think of money or colonialism or democracy as an example of this. Language as a system of values has elements to it and these are “differential” and have “other correlative values”. Saussure’s ‘difference’. The two, institution and system, social and value, are “connected” and language as a “system of contractual values (in part arbitrary, or, more exactly, unmotivated)” is why “it resists the modifications coming from a single individual” and is “consequently a social institution” (14). This step is important for an understanding of the way in which reality comes to be socially constructed and how we end up with the ‘objectifications’ of life.<sup>45</sup>

Barthes as with Daylight and Weber notes that for Saussure “value became an essential concept . . . and eventually more important than signification” (54). Signification, “the act which binds the signifier and the signified, an act whose product is the sign” has, Barthes notes, only a classifying (and not a phenomenological) value” (48). Here once over in the idea of signification is the intra-linguistic, self-referential concern that Saussure’s detractors will level as the inability to “theorize the referent”. But, as we have already seen, and to where we once more go, there is more to it than that. Barthes will agree with Daylight and Weber’s analysis of value: the “union of the signifier and signified . . . does not exhaust the semantic act, for the sign derives its value from its surroundings” and goes one step further, “probably, the mind does not proceed, in the semantic process, by conjunction but by carving out” (48). This is important and brings into the arena phenomenological intentionality and affect in the process of ‘articulation’. We move then with Barthes as opened here from the materiality of language to consciousness. From another context of inquiry we may situate as an example, just here for consciousness, a compelling formulation; one that comes from Robert E. Innis whose suturing of the semiotics of Susanne Langer and the tacit theorization of Michael Polanyi, corroborates this phenomenological ‘carving out’. We have the following under the signpost of “dividing the continuum of experience”:

The problem that Langer, like Polanyi, confronted was what she called the “original segregation” of the continuum. Here she, too, like Polanyi relied on key findings of

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<sup>45</sup> See the Introduction to Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966).

Gestalt Psychology, especially the work of Wolfgang Köhler. For her, this process of “cutting” or “drawing lines” in the sensory array is built into our perceptual apparatus, being, in fact, a biological property of our essentially embodied mind. (10-11)

More primarily, and where we might move around for more perspective, we might go so far as to the unconscious for a hermeneutic of ‘articulation’. Lacan will note that Freud, who preceded the modern linguists (Saussure and Jakobson) in their revival of the signifier,

makes all the more instructive the fact that the mechanisms described by Freud as those of the primary process, by which the unconscious is governed, correspond exactly to the functions this school of linguists [formalism] believes determine the most radical axes of the effects of language, namely metaphor and metonymy—in other words, the effects of substitution and combination of signifiers in the synchronic and diachronic dimensions, respectively, in which they appear in discourse. (677: sect. 799)

With Jakobson we see further and beyond the field of our specific inquiry and will, therefore, only signal here that the syntagmatic aligned as it is in formalism with the preponderance of the metonymic order includes “the heroic epics, the narratives of the Realist School, films by Griffith (close-ups, montage, and variations in the angle of shots) and oneiric projections by displacement or condensation . . . popular novels and newspaper narratives” (Barthes 60). It can be seen, in what we have here brought to the fore in this glancing range of the use of the syntagmatic, that the two axes of language necessitate “two forms of mental activity” with the “analytical activity which applies to the syntagm [being] that of carving out” (58). The reason for this last has to do with ‘discontinuity’ in that “meaning can arise only from an articulation, that is, from a simultaneous division of the signifying layer, and the signified mass: language is, as it were, that which divides reality (for instance the continuous spectrum of the colours is verbally reduced to a series of discontinuous terms)” (64). The further example of the phenomenon of a rainbow can be highly instructive for our purposes. Think only of the way that we see but one discontinuous wave band in the sky. Kyle Takaki, arguing for an ‘enactive realism’ in Polanyi over the “philosophy of expression” of Maurice Merleau-Ponty,<sup>46</sup> is able to use the rainbow as a crux notion between the two philosophical positions exactly because it is necessary to move beyond the “perspectival” to know the dynamism of rainbow experience (43-59).

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<sup>46</sup> A point of interest is that the Lukács/Bloch debate was also concerned with Expressionism.

Lacan, in describing the search in psychoanalysis for the enunciating subject will state that “Lest our hunt be in vain, we analysts must bring everything back to the cut qua function in discourse, the most significant being the cut that constitutes a bar between the signifier and the signified” (678: sect. 801). We return then once more to the ‘arbitrariness of the sign’ but now under the auspice of the possibilities, the “social accentuation” (13-14) function as Tony Bennett describes it, of ‘articulation’ as a cut-out capability in discourse. Not only is articulation central to psychoanalytic therapeutics and the syntagmatic plane of semiological analysis but has as well the capability in authentic literary realism of active participation in the language against the foreclosure of the double phenomenon (signification and value) of dominant and hegemonic cultural projections. Language as “social institution” and “system of values” has the often elided potential to generate the psychopathologies of subjects in social – albeit unconscious – resistance. We will return to this very shortly with a reading of Duiker. For now let us continue to give the ‘floating kingdoms’ its full place in the sun.

In order to account for and give “graphic representation” of the “ambiguity” of signification or “(semiosis)” as Barthes here allows, he presents as one example the following:

$\frac{S}{s}$ : Lacan . . . uses a spatialized writing which, however differs from Saussure’s representation on two points: i) the signifier (S) is global, made up of a multilevelled chain (metaphorical chain): signifier and signified have only a floating relationship and coincide only at certain anchorage points; ii) the line between the signifier (S) and the signified (s) has its own value (which of course it had not in Saussure): it represents the repression of the signified. (49)

The summation given to us by Barthes is entirely accurate but does not take into its ambit the full formulation of this “cut qua function in discourse” or with Barthes, the “repression of the signified” as given by Lacan in *Écrits*. For Lacan, “if we are to rediscover the pertinence of all this” which is to say the desire of the Other that is misrecognised as our own and whose locus is the signifier,

a sufficiently sophisticated study, that can only be situated in the context of analytic experience, must enable us to complete the structure of fantasy by essentially linking here, regardless of its occasional elisions, the moment of a fading or eclipse of the subject—which is closely tied to the *Spaltung* or splitting he undergoes due to his subordination to the signifier—to the condition of an object . . . (691: sect. 815-16)

Lacan will, in his enumeration of the “Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire” situate the “problem” of “What am *I*?” as a ‘*Jouissance*’ which is locatable when “*I* am in the

place from which ‘the universe is a flaw in the purity of Non-Being’ is vociferated”. Key is the “vociferated” which is an amplified act of ‘articulation’; a jouissance. But, the *I* repressed as it is by the signifier, continuously experiences “fading” or an “eclipse” as when Lacan states the following as an axiomatic definition of what we know as value in a now more radical sense: “My definition of the signifier (there is no other) is as follows: a signifier is what represents a subject to another signifier” (694: sect. 819). The *I* that is the “unpronounceable” signified that we catch “fading” and “eclipsed” by the signifier (S) and by which “all the other signifiers represent the subject” is for Lacan “symbolized by the inherence of a (-1) in the set of signifiers”. It is for this reason “unpronounceable” but, “its operation is not, for the latter [its operation] is what occurs whenever a proper name is pronounced” and “Its statement is equal to its signification”. Lacan now gives the full graphic representation that Barthes summarized:

$$\frac{S(\text{signifier})}{s(\text{signified})} = s(\text{the statement}),$$

$$\text{with } S = (-1), \text{ we find: } s = \sqrt{-1}$$

(649).

The “statement of the subject” as its ‘value’ which also “represents the repression of the signified” as Barthes quite rightly stated is also “equal to its signification”. This double phenomenon of signification and ‘value’ of the subject allows us to see that the signifier (S) that is equalized to the “unpronounceable” *I* forces the signified into a – to use the language of algebra that Lacan seems to want us to adopt – position of the ‘simplified’, or ‘simple form’ as the radicand of the square root here designates:  $\sqrt{-1}$ . The implications for an understanding of the way in which discourse is able to stance the subject – to ‘simplify’ as we saw with the unnamed psychologists reduction of Zebren to the sign “evil” – in isolation as a sign, when they no longer are able to give coherent ‘articulation’ to their subject position, as the language only allows, is why Lacan can state the following from analytical experience of the analysand:

This is why I am given to guiding my students to the places where logic is disconcerted by the disjunction that breaks through from the imaginary to the symbolic, not in order to indulge in the paradoxes that are thus generated, or in some supposed crisis in thought, but, on the contrary, to redirect their fake shine to the gap they designate – which I always find quite simply edifying – and above all to try to create a method from a sort of calculus whose very inappropriateness would flush out the secret. (695: sect. 820)

What is at stake is “what structures the subject”. We are naming it, following Saussure, and its fully fledged development in Lacan ‘floating kingdoms’.

Barthes alerts us to the importance of the floating kingdom for Saussure and for “the future of semiological analysis” (57) in the conclusion of his discussion of the “Signifier and Signified” chapter of the *Elements*. Saussure’s concept of ‘articulation’ is given by way of a sheet of paper and a water simile. For Barthes these figures emphasize “that language is the domain of *articulations*, and the meaning is above all a cutting-out of shapes. It follows that the future task of semiology is far less to establish lexicons of objects than to rediscover the articulations which men impose on reality . . .” It may be of use before making our way to Duiker’s ‘zero point’ and ‘alter-nativist’ ‘floating kingdoms’ to posit in full Barthes’s reading of the ‘articulation’ in Saussure for clarity:

In order to account for the double phenomenon of signification and value, Saussure used the analogy of a sheet of paper; if we cut out shapes in it, on the one hand we get various pieces (A, B, C), each of which has value in relation to its neighbours, and, on the other, each of these pieces has a recto and verso, *which have been cut out at the same time* (A-A’, B-B’, C-C’): this is the signification. This comparison is useful because it leads us to an original conception of the production of meaning: no longer as the mere correlation of a signifier and a signified, but perhaps more essentially *as an act of simultaneously cutting into* two amorphous masses, two ‘floating kingdoms’ as Saussure says. For Saussure imagines that at the (entirely theoretical) origin of meaning, ideas and sounds form two floating, labile, continuous and parallel masses of substances; meaning intervenes when one cuts at the same time and at a single stroke into these two masses. The signs (thus produced) are therefore *articuli*; meaning is therefore an order with chaos on either side, but this order is essentially a *division*. The language is an intermediate object between sound and thought: it consists *in uniting both while simultaneously decomposing them*. (56)

Although not directly expressed here by Saussure but certainly manifest is the fact that the concept of the ‘floating kingdom’ is relational not only in terms of signifier-to-signified (A-A) but also formative of a *system* of signification (A-A’, B-B’, C-C’) that generates the language and therefore, through ‘value,’ specific forms of consciousness. I will return here in the conclusion to the thesis to try and explain more clearly, from examples, within the thesis.

*To Not 'Fit' and an 'Alter-Nativist' Cure*

In 1956, a year prior to his deportation from Algeria, Frantz Fanon resigned from the Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital where he was the medical director. Notable parts of his resignation letter for our discussion read thus:

Madness is one of the means man has of losing his freedom . . . The function of a social structure is to set up institutions to serve man's needs. A society that drives its members to desperate solutions is a non-viable society, a society to be replaced . . . The events in Algeria are the logical consequence of an abortive attempt to decerebralize a people. (*Towards* 53)

At the psychiatric hospital, initially “a sanctuary for those physically and psychologically injured” (“Frantz” N. pag.) in the Algerian revolution, Fanon's patients included both tortured and torturer. The staff under Fanon's directorship are said to have been “arrested, some beaten, [while] others had joined in the strike action called by the *Front de Libération National*; others went to fight in the mountains”. The hospital was considered by the French colonial authorities to be a “veritable nest of fellaghas [militants]”.

The extent to which his experiences as a practicing psychiatrist generated a clear formulation in Fanon's thinking with regards to psychiatric institutes under colonial domination can be read in *The Wretched of the Earth* with the following pronouncement:

The truth is that colonization, in its very essence, already appeared to be a great purveyor of psychiatric hospitals. Since 1954 we have drawn the attention of French and international psychiatrists in scientific works to the difficulty of “curing” a colonized subject correctly, in other words making him thoroughly *fit* into a social environment of the colonial type. . . . In the calm of this period of triumphant colonization, a constant and considerable stream of mental symptoms are direct sequels of this oppression. (*Towards* 181-2: my emphasis)

During the “calm” of “triumphant colonization” is when, accordingly, mental institutions and psychiatric hospitals (we could of course add the criminalization of the colonial subject) have their superlative capability. Pathologized colonial subjects, subjects experiencing psychosocial stressors on a daily basis, potentially deviate and often suffer, by not being able to “fit” into the ‘zero point’. Mignolo, arguing for “cosmopolitan localism” has as well recognised the permeations of the deeply ingrained capitalist ethic of ‘fitting’ and aligns it with an understated continuing social Darwinism where, today, “The fittest are those who fit capitalist and neo-liberal designs, which of course are not universal, but, postulated as such, leave out of the

cosmo-polis all those who are not interested in “‘fitting’” (255-58). The concept of “the survival of the fittest” hereby underpins ideas such as ‘success’ and ‘competition’ which are triumphal processes of an ostensible objective reality in capitalist society and which Mignolo sees as now being contested. Duiker’s authentic realism and his articulation by way of the characters that he develops is an example of contesting, from an ‘alter-nativist’ perspective, the idea of objective reality and why it is exactly that some individuals do not ‘fit’ the social system in which they experience reality. To continue with Mignolo, “Such a horizon of life” he states, concerning the Andean virtue ethic of “‘to live in harmony’” is “‘alien to capitalist societies, in which competition and personal success—economically and politically as well as in the world of entertainment and sport is encouraged, celebrated, and rewarded” (258). What Fanon directs us towards with his introduction to the “Colonial War and Mental Disorders” chapter of the *Wretched of the Earth* is the ‘pathogenesis’ of colonial consciousness originating from the colonial experience itself, its development as contradiction in the colonial subject and its effectuation in ‘madness’.

W. E. B. DuBois’s productive concept of ‘double consciousness’ is hereby given new causal weight by Fanon as ‘sociogeny’; a “new theoretical object of knowledge” anathematizing “our present culture’s purely biological definition of what it is to *be*, and therefore of what it is *like to be*, human” (Wynter N. pag.). Sylvia Wynter utilizing *Black Skins/White Masks* will further Fanon’s sociogenesis as the “sociogenetic principle” to counter and unhinge “the genomic principle defining of the species-identity of purely organic life”. Wynter advocates the necessity of a “new language” able, on the level of culture, to give double negation to the physical and biological in a “hybrid level of ontogenetic/sociogenetic existence”. A new “sense of self” which “outside the terms of each culture-specific order of consciousness” allows for the redistribution of the “parameters of our orders of consciousness and modes of subjective experience”.

Wynter in her conceptualizing of a ‘new’ cultural onto-circuitry of consciousness by way of language is thus putting into theoretical practice Fanon’s plea that concludes *The Wretched*: “For Europe, for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must make a new start, develop a new way of thinking, and endeavor to create a new man”. (239)

It is to particular subjective consciousness in resistance to the “‘closed integration’, the ‘totality’” of the “system” – which Lukács spoke of in Chapter One regarding the determinations of consciousness – that we must now necessarily turn to. We recall that the question asked and answered by Lukács was to whether or not the “system” “with its unity of economics and ideology, really form an objective whole, independent of consciousness?” (31)

Fanon, writing against the colonial system of domination states that “Because it is a systematized negation of the other, a frenzied determination to deny the other any attribute of humanity, colonialism forces the colonized to constantly ask the question: ‘Who am I in reality?’” (182). Please, as well, recall Lacan’s “What am *I*?”

This questioning of reality and the contradictions of lived experience of the “objective whole” we add, then leads to “defensive positions” in the consciousness of the colonized and ultimately, for Fanon, “When colonization remains unchallenged by armed resistance, when the sum of harmful stimulants exceeds a certain threshold, the colonized’s defenses collapse, and many of them end up in psychiatric institutions” (182). “In order to understand this ‘sensitivity’” states Fanon with regards to the “defensive positions” of what we are also arguing as the ‘zero point’, “we need only study and appreciate the scope and depth of the wounds inflicted on the colonized during a single day under a colonial regime”. Let us do exactly that – engage this ‘sensitivity,’ this ‘defensive position,’ this ‘aisthesis’ – with one more close reading from the beginning of the *Quiet Violence*.

### *The Newly Rag Man and the Fashion Sense, or is that Police?*

I would like to open with an intersubjective ‘zero point/ alter-native’ antagonism in the *Quiet Violence* that will have much bearing on the argument that I have been putting forward in the thesis. It is an antagonism that I believe acts as a critique by Duiker as to the isolation of ‘alter-native’ individuals – their lack of ‘value’ – in post-apartheid South Africa.

Tshepo, the ‘lumpen’-flaneur begins the *Quiet Violence* with “There’s no one to blame. It’s about me. It’s always been about me” (7). Close to Tshepo, is Mmabatho, who is a definitive type of “universal perspective” (*Wretched* 156) or ‘zero point’ universalizing (Mignolo 80) ‘articulation’ to the life of Tshepo. In the sub-section of her first narrative entry the reader is told that “The police find Tshepo roaming around Main road in Woodstock. He is naked except for an old sheepskin seat cover that is precariously wrapped around his waist” (13). The policeman “Sergeant Andrews” we are told by Mmabatho “found him parading naked in front of a busy butchery in Salt River”. To re-inforce the sense of native identity being instantiated here, Tshepo “keeps saying and whispers to himself ‘I’ve seen Mam’lambo’” (14). ‘Mam’lambo’ is understood in African mythical cosmology and oral tradition to be a “half-



fish, half-horse monster' which "eats their [victims] faces off and sucks out the people's brains""<sup>47</sup>.

Having taken Tshepo home after this incident, Mmabatho "notice[s] that he has a small shrine near the window. He's put some dried acacia leaves, herbs and various objects on a little table. In the centre there's a wooden box with a delicate branch on top" (15). According to Mmabatho's point of view "It sits ominous like Pandora's box. Looking at it sends shivers up my spine". In asking Tshepo "Is it a shrine?" he "corrects" her "No it's my altar". To this she states "Alter. Any sacrifices, dead babies I should know about?' I say making light of the serious matter". This "making light of the serious matter" is indicative of the way in which any attempt to 'articulate' an 'alter-nativist' system of values and beliefs, or ways of seeing and knowing the world, are immediately cast into the order of 'evil' and hence the "Pandora's Box" by Mmbatho. In being sarcastic, Tshepo, conscious of the way Mmbatho views 'alter-nativist' explorations says the shrine is an "alter".

In fact, Duiker will build into the narrative progression an almost subliminal encoding with regards to the 'articulation' of Mmabatho. At one point we hear Tshepo describe Mmabatho's fashion style:

Every item seems to have a story about it, secretly divulging something about her personality. A penchant for eastern things, a prejudice for the Xhosa culture. Her clothes are so much a part of her that it's impossible for me to imagine her naked.

The truth about what she looks like underneath would be unsettling. It would be like seeing an ostrich but with all its feathers plucked. (56)

I ask the reader to be reminded that Duiker's authentic realism is a way in which "to penetrate the laws governing objective reality and to uncover the deeper, hidden, mediated, not immediately perceptible network of relationships that go to make up society" (*Aesthetics* 38). Duiker's 'conscious commitment' aligns Mmbatho with a "prejudice for the Xhosa culture" and a "penchant for eastern things" (56) to show her as being influenced by the social formation of post-apartheid society. Mmbatho's clothing, as Tshepo remarks, is "secretly divulging something about her personality". When Duiker states that "Every item seems to have a story about it" here, he at another point details what Mmabatho is wearing: "Mmabatho is wearing her army fatigue pants with a dark T-shirt. She's dyed her hair a stubborn platinum blond colour

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<sup>47</sup> See variously, an incident first raised in the Eastern Cape legislature in 1997 by MEC Ezra Sigwela: <<http://web.ncf.ca/bz050/mamlam.html>>. See in particular the 'Comment' at end in which there is given a taxonomical rationalization to the incidents but also note that without the consciousness and oral knowledge of danger – a type of shade to the mythological signification – these bodies would not have been found; therefore bringing value.

and wears purple nail varnish. Her Adidas tackies have red laces. I don't know what look she's going for but it makes her interesting to look at" (33). This description by Tshepo precedes a frictional conversation between them beginning immediately with Tshepo stating "Nice hair" to which Mmabatho does not reply and instead relates her experiences (confined mostly to music) of the previous night out clubbing: "drum & bass, hip hop, kwaito and a little r & b, mostly phat sounds. Ja, you'd definitely like it,' she adds". Tshepo's response is sarcastic as "So bo darkie bateng?" translating from Sotho as 'so were there any darkies?':<sup>48</sup> this opens the diatribe between them even more. Mmabatho's response after she says "Ja, but you know what it's like in Cape Town. If you're black and you don't do the darkie thing then they say you're trying to be white and all that crap. I just don't go for that blacker than thou thing, so I don't pay much attention to where I go,' she says dismissing my point. I thought it was valid. Sometimes I think Mmabatho says things just to provoke me" (33). When Mmabatho tells Tshepo that you can at least "get away with being yourself more in Cape Town . . . than in Jo'burg,'" (33, 34) he narrates that "I'm only vaguely interested in what she says" (34).

The reason why he is "only vaguely interested" and ultimately dismisses her arguments with "She is preaching. I've heard it all before" leads into a long critique of the consumer and foreign influenced culture of post-apartheid new South Africa. It also relates to something Duiker mentions in the de Vries interview when he says that ". . . we never knew a period of rest, nor did we receive help to enter into a process of healing after apartheid" (23). The passage in question begins with, "We sit in silence, the way I like, and admire the view. The sun licks clouds, for a while it hides behind them" (34) and ends with "These are things that define the club culture in Cape Town, not racial politics" (35).<sup>49</sup> The entirety of the socio-economic critique is neatly summed up by Duiker in his poem "One Breezy Night late in November": "Perhaps it's not about whitey and darkey anymore" (Duiker qtd. Mzamane 62). And in another poem "The Architect and the Vagrant" it reaches further into the depths in the closing question "What is anything worth if it isn't built on love?" (63). In terms of demonstrating Duiker's 'authentic' realist 'commitment' it brings an 'articulation' of the 'alter-native' consciousness that Tshepo has developed and furthermore, is a highlighting by Duiker, of the social and economic forces producing objective reality and relegating the 'alter-nativist' perspective to the 'lumpen' margins.

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<sup>48</sup> I am grateful to Azaria Morake for this and further translations. After mind-numbing searches on the web the best I could find is: <<http://www.tolika.co.za/>>

<sup>49</sup> I have not the space in the thesis to give the full passage, which deserves to be given in full, and am therefore including it as Addendum for ease of access for the interested reader.

The change of narrative voice to Mmabatho, following Tshepo's scathing commentary of contemporary culture, is presented to us as the depressive position: "Tshepo does his best to hide his sadness but I can see it spilling out from the corner of his eye and can hear it in his sigh" (36). The episode in the "sheepskin seat cover" and the "parading naked in front of a busy butchery" whilst "whisper[ing] to himself 'I've seen Mam'lambo'" (13, 14) that begins the *Quiet Violence* takes on new symbolic weight if we look at it in relation to Tshepo's anger and "sadness" at the development of the New South Africa. Tshepo, the lamb to cultural and economic slaughter then. We will return now to the reason Tshepo has entered Valkenburg Psychiatric hospital and the 'subject as signifier' that I have worked through with Barthes and Lacan where the subject, through 'zero point' discourse, is reduced to the 'simplified form'. Or, following Fanon and Mignolo how, because Tshepo does not "fit" (*Towards* 181-2) into the social order, he will be sent out of society to be "cured".

Mmabatho, being coerced by Tshepo's housemates, one who is particularly at odds with him as to whether he be taken to a mental hospital or not, states "I don't like the idea but I feel outvoted. Besides, I'm not his mother, I remind myself" (14). Mmabatho goes into Tshepo's room and finds "him huddled in the corner of the mattress. A duvet wrapped around him": "'Aish. You're not dressed,' I say a little annoyed". The response by Tshepo is given to the reader as "'I have nothing clean to wear,' he says pathetically in a faraway voice". Later while in Valkenburg and after Tshepo's critique of contemporary culture Mmabatho makes the following observation:

We sit again in silence, the birds chirping in the tree. Two patients walk past us. I watch them carefully and try to notice anything weird about their gestures. But there's nothing unusual about them. They both look ordinary like people I might pass in Obs although they could use a comb and they look scruffy. The fact that they look untidy doesn't offend me. I mention it because it's the only thing I can pick up which seems different about them. (37)

The difference then is one of appearances. After Tshepo escapes from Valkenburg and Mmabatho meets him at the train station the reader is given a rare straightforward "glimpse" of his physical features; and as she narrates, "His cheekbones stick out obscenely and his cheeks look gaunt. It is a sudden discovery and it shocks me" (63). Tshepo tells Mmabatho "'I'm hungry,'" and she suggests "'We can get a chip roll,'"". He then "walks ahead, hardly looking to see if I'm keeping up with him. People push and brush past me impatiently. Annoyed I make my way through the milling crowd". There is, admittedly, ambiguity in this incident in that it can be seen that Tshepo has "walk[ed] ahead" out of unconcern, which seems to be

Mmabatho's interpretation, or it can be seen to be because he doesn't have money to pay for the "chip roll" and is reliant on Mmabatho's charity, as when he thanks her "'I'll pay you back'" to which she replies "'Don't be ridiculous, it's nothing'" (63). There is also the possibility that it is the "milling crowd" that causes him to act in this way or further, that the base physiological level of need, as Abraham Maslow has conceptualised, namely here hunger, causes Tshepo to behave in a certain way.

Having declined the offer from Mmabatho of another chip roll, even though she can "sense that he is still hungry" she thinks to herself that "His manners are a little bourgeois" (64). The time having been spent with Tshepo is time in which Mmabatho was meant to be at rehearsals at the Drama department where she studies and after the pressure of having missed her rehearsals forces her to send Tshepo home (his own) and go to the department, there is a temporal break. The reader is then shifted "After rehearsals" to a date with Arne, Mmabatho's German boyfriend, who is "doing his research for his thesis, something about economic constraints in rural areas" and she "listen[s] absent-mindedly, nodding and aahing in appropriate places but hardly absorbing anything he says" (65). What is made clear – by way of an argument over economically and socially constrained Tshepo, whom Arne argues is "not a child" – is that she is worried about him. The contradictions become even more compounded in that the "hostess" of the "Mexican restaurant in Obs" is "an oldish charming Frenchwoman" known as "Madam Spiers" (65). Mmabatho, through her stream of admiration, describes her as "a lady, of the type of European breeding from a forgotten era, polite and with the sort of manners that make anyone feel welcome, comfortable." What is more;

She's a woman who likes the nicer things in life and surrounds herself with amicable people. But as much as she is charming I'm sure she can be equally shrewd and business-like in the way she deals with people . . . For people like her money isn't everything. You can see that in the way she dresses, in the things she says. The restaurant is just something to keep her busy, when she's not going on exotic holidays and shopping for exquisite antiques and paintings to furnish her stylish restaurant". (66)

No chip rolls here then. In other words and through the tone, Mmabatho admires her for her bourgeoisieness but condemns the similar characteristics in Tshepo.

What is Tshepo doing in the mean time we may ask? The interior narration begins "Dear Mama," (67) and is a short, heart-wrenching soliloquy addressed to his murdered mother. The content revolves around reluctantly entering into the lumpen life-world. "I miss you" he narrates in direct address to her, "and ache for the days when you were around to look after me

. . . I miss the way you berated me for drinking water from the tap without using a glass". The instilled manners, in other words which Mmabatho found "a little bourgeois". Tshepo continues, "I took a small walk in Obs". It is a "small walk" here because after the "sheepskin seat cover" episode, on being asked by his antagonistic housemate Alice previously "'where have you been for the last three days?'" he replied "'Walking'" (14). We may therefore understand this same housemates' "'What's he bloody on?'" as a 'zero point' distortion of the reality of the situation. Nevertheless for just now, Tshepo continues once more. Note, please, the range in the sympathetic imaginative targets:

and saw my life in the expression of strangers, in the things people were doing. It was strange. One minute I was walking, the next minute, I saw myself in the little boy sulking because his mother refused to buy him ice cream. In the bergie [homeless person] with eloquent eyes who stood outside the Spar singing and crying, but no one seemed to notice. Or the shop assistant hurrying back to work from her lunch break. I suddenly felt uncomfortable and *mad*. I wanted to run away. But there was nowhere left to run. I felt cornered. (67 emphasis is mine)

"[C]ornered" because Tshepo has at this stage already gone the "mad" route and the psychiatric institution was not a determinately viable option. As he continues: "I felt lost and empty like I'd used up all my feelings. Or perhaps I was so depressed I couldn't recognise emotions. The pain was too deep, people almost winced when they looked at me" (67).

Tshepo's view has hitherto been distorted but he not only begins now the development of a properly formulated 'articulation' of his subject position which I am arguing as 'alternative' but he also begins to activate the 'value' of this position:

I feel the emptiness of the sky, the coldness of night, the muted silence of the ocean and the suicidal nature of waves crashing in on themselves repeatedly, obsessively. The *violence* of it all, I understand it. I am not the first person to feel like this nor am I the last. There are legions of other people like me out there, slowly getting on with the *quietness* of their lives. And when they crumble, our paths cross at places like Valkenburg. I also bump into them in Obs, silent and almost invisible in their struggle with the business of living. Mysteries are welling up inside me. Life is conspiring to teach me it's (sic) harshest lessons. (67 my emphases)

There is now a movement out of the primal 'zero point' gaze of the other: "people seem to eat me with their eyes" (67), and the beginning of an 'articulation' of an 'I' as an awareness of self that, as we will more and more see, moves towards the idea of 'value' which is to say community: "I wish for the courage of street children and try not to feel sorry for myself" (69).

We could certainly – looking towards *Thirteen Cents* – pause here but I believe that I can better prove my point by continuing. An explanation for the reasoning behind Duiker’s alluring title for this novel – *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* – comes into view just here and I would like to follow that lead. Tshepo has stated, “There are legions of other people like me out there, slowly getting on with the *quietness* of their lives” and “The *violence* of it all, I understand it” (67 my emphases). Just here, and following from this he states, “I use to have big *dreams*, big ideas about a world that was mine for the taking. I was foolishly younger, my youth an excuse to go blindly through life. But with my wounds I realise how delicate the world really is, how preciously everything hangs in the balance. . . . Every day I get closer to the person I really am and away from the one people want to see” (68; my emphasis). In other words, Tshepo is consciously beginning to determine and be confident about, his ‘alter-native’ lumpen position in society and his narrative for this passage ends with the following: “But I mostly wish that the little things I’m beginning to see will make room for a bigger heart, so that tomorrow I may see a little more of the bigger picture” (69). Duiker’s ‘authentic’ realism is all about doing just this!

After Tshepo’s short “walk” Mmabatho opens her focalization with “I find Tshepo later at Wrench Road” (69) and this existent real-world road in Observatory, where Mmbatho finds Tshepo ‘mad’ again after a “walk” acts as a conceit-signifier, once again (as with the leitmotif of “tea” earlier), and is followed by a strange mistake in the *Quiet Violence* because I believe Duiker wanted to underline something very specific here. Let me try to tease it out of the narrative and thereafter, in the next section, relate it to Fanon.

The following sentences run concurrently as such: “I find Tshepo later at Wrench Road. Alice opens the door and looks relieved to see me. It isn’t a good sign” (69). Now obviously Tshepo cannot be in two places at once. So what is happening here? Alice, Tshepo’s antagonistic housemate, who had previously asked ““What’s he bloody on?”” (14) in response to Tshepo telling her had gone “walking” now says to Mmbatho, “I think you better see him. He’s been in his room all evening. He hasn’t had anything to eat,’ she says, a furrow between her brows” (69). On seeing Tshepo in his room “looking morose and hungry” and where “A large candle burns while ghoulis sounding Ambient music echoes throughout”, Mmabatho, after switching the music off, states ““Tshepo, this music is depressing. It’s not helping,’ I say and open a window because the air is stale”. Tshepo’s response is a clear ““And you are?”” To this Mmabatho retorts ““Ke eng ka wena?””<sup>50</sup> (translating from Sotho as “what’s with you?”),

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<sup>50</sup> Translating from Sotho as “what’s with you?” I am grateful to Azaria Morake for this translation.

and as Mmbatho continues, “My God, you were perfect this afternoon. What happened?”’. “Just say it, Mmbatho,” he snaps . . . ‘Say it. You were perfect and now you’re crazy again’” (69). I ask the reader to take especial note of the ‘linguistic value,’ the signs surrounding one another, in “ghoulish . . . depressing . . . stale . . . My God” by Mmbatho, who also takes recourse in her frustration to Sotho in this exchange, and then Tshepo’s retaliation for an admission of “crazy” from her.

To add to this, Tshepo’s housemates “Alex, Paul, Julia and Alice” (70), have given him an ultimatum of “a week to find a new place,” and Mmbatho is “shocked and surprised that the others – *whoever they are* – think it best to kick out Tshepo in his hour of need . . . can they be that callous?” (70 emphasis is mine). Tshepo believes Alice, his main antagonist, to be “evil”. This is significant in that an unformalized ‘alter-nativism’ often resorts to the binary in the language when it is caught in the language system of the ‘zero point’. We saw this exact same recourse to metaphysical terminology with Zebron in my previous analysis. Now, I must highlight that it was Alice who set the drug abuse discourse in motion in the first place with “What’s he bloody on?” (14), but in that same confrontation Alice also set another legitimization into process in that when Alex, after Tshepo’s long “walk”, comments that “I think we should let him see someone” it is immediately qualified by Alice with: “You mean a psychiatrist? ‘Cause I think he’s, you know, gone,’ Alice says and makes a crude gesture to her head” (14). The idea that Tshepo is ‘crazy’ presented as unarguable truth, is very much initiated here by Alice. But it is also picked up by readers such as de Vries who, in the interview with Duiker states, regarding the *Quiet Violence* that Tshepo “. . . ended up in an institution for his excessive drug abuse” (23). The ‘zero point’ as we see, is pervasive. In the same way that “Every way of knowing and sensing (feeling) that do not conform to the epistemology and aesthesis of the zero point are cast behind in time and/or in the order of myth, legend, folklore, local knowledge, and the like” (Mignolo 80), so too, is “every way of knowing and sensing (feeling) that [does] not conform” to the lived reality of the ‘zero point’ cast into terms of drug addict, crazy person, failure, and so on.

Tshepo’s “callous” housemates as well as Mmbatho, agree that he is a drug user and that he is crazy, and Tshepo asks Mmbatho, as he realizes what they think of him, “They want me to go to Valkenburg, don’t they?” (16). And, to Valkenburg Tshepo is sent although a social worker trained in crisis intervention would have been less drastic but no less structurally determined and determining. Tshepo himself, does not understand and states as much once inside Valkenburg: “The truth is I still don’t know how it happened. Things just got out of hand and I landed in a mental institution. It’s hard to accept that. I feel angry with myself” (20). And

this relays to the very first words of the *Quiet Violence*: “There’s no one to blame. It’s about me. It’s always been about me. I accept that now. But I still find it hard to explain what really happened, what was really going on in my life” (7). Lacan has perhaps given the best representation of what it was exactly that began Tshepo on his ‘wrench’ journey:

$$\frac{S \text{ (signifier)}}{s \text{ (signified)}} = s \text{ (the statement)},$$

with S = (-1), we find:  $s = \sqrt{-1}$

I would like as a conclusion to come back to this formula because, on the one hand, it will help to clarify some of the weighted theory of that section, and on the other, speaks directly to what I have been arguing throughout the thesis. For the moment I want to clarify Fanon’s relation to “Wrench” which, if taken symbolically, is the means by which Tshepo’s ‘alter-nativism’ is fixed into place with the turn of discourse, and if taken phonetically, gives this sign ‘value’ with Fanon.

I have no doubt that Duiker read and was influenced by Fanon. In the *Quiet Violence* we have the delineation of a consciousness which has “thrown [her]self headlong into Western culture” and in *Thirteen Cents* another who “In order to secure his salvation, in order to escape the supremacy of white culture . . . feels the need to return to his unknown roots and lose himself, come what may, among his barbaric people” (*Wretched* 155). These quotes come from Fanon’s “On National Culture”. A chapter title that would have spoken directly to Duiker’s post-apartheid, South African moment. Tshepo’s “defensive position” at the outset of *Quiet Violence* that we have already analysed and where “the sum of harmful stimulants exceeds a certain threshold” (182) and which by ‘zero point’ coercion lead him to the Valkenburg Psychiatric Hospital, are described by Fanon as a necessary phenomenon for the development of a “liberating consciousness” (157) and ultimately a “genuine national culture” (119):

Because he feels he is becoming alienated, in other words the living focus of contradictions which risk becoming insurmountable, the colonized intellectual *wrenches* himself from the quagmire which threatens to suck him down, and determined to believe what he finds, he accepts and ratifies it with heart and soul.  
(155; my emphasis)

This principle of “wrench” is for Fanon necessary so as to avoid the “two determinations” that come with colonialism and nationalism as in (being) English and South African, or Anglo-Saxon and Sotho and which at end, in the inability to choose, becomes the adoption of a



“thoroughly universal perspective” as regards to history, heritage and tradition. Moreover, as Fanon continues, “This painful and harrowing *wrench* is, however, a necessity. Otherwise we will be faced with extremely serious psycho-affective mutilations: individuals without an anchorage, without borders, colorless, stateless, rootless, a body of angels” (155 my emphasis). Neither this nor that the colonized subject becomes, in other words, caught in the spin of a double consciousness. And here we come to the underlying psychological, textual, and formal dynamics of Duiker’s authentic realism.

Tshepo at the beginning of *The Quiet Violence*, without any clear ontological determination – caught between being and non-being – is thrown up against the skin of the horizon and can only catch and reflect glimpses of the outside, as with his inability to ‘articulate’ the sheepskin episode or all his other attempts to think through the ‘zero point’ language system which maintains itself as the rational and objective reality. Azure on the other hand but no less a part of the same ‘lumpen’ reality as Tshepo, is less caught by common sense, but more by the “dangerous class” and is thereby forced into a more necessary bifurcated ‘alter-nativist’ world view and we see this in the very *écriture* of the mountain scenes and the dreams and healing experiences and the search for an ‘outside’ that he has there. The *Hidden Star* as formal activation of the ‘storyteller’ mode for literature is no less important and we can perhaps continue that conversation in another space. As Tshepo had stated “A flitting glance can open another universe” (*Quiet* 61) and we have that most clearly from Azure not as a want but as a need. This is the force of Duiker’s ‘authentic’ realism and his ‘alter-nativist’ ‘articulation’ now, needs only, ‘value’ which this thesis hopes to have helped generate.

### *Conclusion: Come Outside and Play*

I would like as a conclusion to strike through the thesis and ‘articulate,’ by way of examples already used throughout the analysis, the central line of argument that has been raised.

Ernst Bloch in his “Discussing Expressionism” essay, which acted as a rebuff to Georg Lukács’s “The Greatness and Decline of Expressionism” essay of 1934, at one point states the following: “For all the pleasure the Expressionists took in ‘barbaric art’, their ultimate goal was humane; their themes were almost exclusively human expressions of the incognito, the mystery of man” (*Aesthetics* 24 my emphasis). I will clarify momentarily why I am utilizing this quote by Bloch.

Let us turn to Charles Murray who in describing the ‘lumpen’ in Britain states that he “‘first noticed the underclass in the town where he grew up’” and will later term them “‘barbarians’” (Murray qtd. Cowling 233, 235). Remember too that Murray saw, what he terms the ‘underclass,’ as “a threat to the survival of ‘free institutions and a *civil* society’” (Cowling and Murray qtd. 235 my emphasis). Between Bloch and Murray do the signs of ‘barbaric’ and ‘barbarian’ relate to the past or to the present, or is it a descriptive term from the past playing out in the present?

If we take into consideration the US President Barack Obama’s 2012 speech concerning child soldiers and child prostitutes in the twenty-first century, it would seem to be both. Here is the statement: “it is barbaric, and it is evil, and it has no place in a civilized world”.<sup>51</sup> ‘Barbarity’ is by both Murray and Obama diametrically opposed to ‘civilized’ but Obama is stating that children should, “in a civilized world”, not be treated in “barbaric” and therefore “evil” ways. And yet they are.

Duiker in an interview with Luvuyo Kakaza two weeks before his suicide tells us where he took his inspiration from for *Thirteen Cents*:

‘Living there [Cape Town] I got very close to the street children . . . I crossed over to their world. One day, one of the street children, a nine-year-old, Sammy went missing. The other street children asked me to help look for him. It took us two weeks and we found Sammy. A so-called gentleman had offered to take care of Sammy, offered him a place, food, schooling, and in return he would be his sex toy’.  
(25)

To what ‘barbaric’ now refers becomes somewhat murky because “gentleman” in a “civilized world” are behaving, as Obama pointed out, like ‘barbarians’?

What of those who are not “so-called gentleman”? Travis Bickle (Robert De Niro) in the film *Taxi Driver* for instance. Bickle can by no means be classed as a “gentleman” and even cuts his hair into a Mohawk style, like the ‘barbarians’ did. Yet, this character who looks like a ‘barbarian’ and not a “gentleman” will save a little girl living in a ‘civilized’ world from prostitution.

Is *Taxi Driver* a film advocating ‘barbarism’ then because if it is Lord Shaftesbury, writing in the early eighteenth century, argued very strongly against the “taletellers” of the “barbarous” and believed popular publications should be more agreeable to the ‘civilized’

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<sup>51</sup> See Owen Jarus who also gives an historical analysis of the shifting meaning of the word ‘barbarian’:  
<http://www.livescience.com/45297-barbarians.html>

(*Characteristics* 153-57). Shaftesbury believed that art should not focus on ‘particular’ things in the world. *Taxi Driver* and *Thirteen Cents* and *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* and *The Hidden Star* which all focus on “minuteness” and “singularity” like the “mere face-painter” and “mere historian” and which for the most part “strictly copies life” would have been for Shaftesbury “unnatural” (*Essay* 66-67). Shaftesbury understood very well that artistic production can influence people and the direction of the culture in a society.

*Taxi Driver* was influential because the football superstar David Beckham cut his hair into the same style as Travis Bickle, which is to say, in a Mohawk like the ‘barbarians’ use to. Sir Alex Fergusson, Beckham’s manager, obviously does not like the ‘barbarian’ look because he made Beckham shave it off.<sup>52</sup> Duiker tells us in one of his assignments from the Booktrust that the ‘barbarian’ or “outlandish” (Duike qtd. van der Merwe 7) hairstyle became very popular in one of the centres of the ‘civilized’ world, namely contemporary England . Of interest is that Duiker saw someone dressed like a ‘gentleman’ “in a pin-striped suit” but who also had “The strangest combination of orthodox and anti-establishment [he had] ever seen – a suit and a mohawk (sic)” (Duike qtd. van der Merwe 7). In other words, dressed like a ‘gentleman’ and a ‘barbarian’ at the same time. One can then in the ‘civilized’ world both behave like, and look like, a ‘gentleman’ or ‘barbarian’ at the same time.

‘Barbarism’ seems to be associated with violence though as when Obama states that “When a little boy is kidnapped, turned into a child soldier, forced to kill or be killed – that’s slavery. . . . It is barbaric”.<sup>53</sup> Duiker, while speaking of violence in his interview with Fred de Vries, states that , “It is a fascinating aspect of our culture and our heritage. I tried to see the message behind it. Was it unadulterated barbarism, as the media would like to portray it, or does it have to do with another type of reality that Western culture just cannot grasp?” (23-24) Duiker in this declaration echoes something stated by Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* who speaks of colonized people who can attain a “liberating consciousness” (*Wretched* 157) but that, “In order to secure [their] salvation, in order to escape the supremacy of white culture . . . need to return to [their] unknown roots and lose [themselves], come what may, among [their] barbaric people” (155). Duiker’s “reality of Western culture” and Fanon’s “supremacy of white culture” seem to connate violence of another kind: symbolic and psychic. If it were that violence – of any type in our age – were the only signified of ‘barbarism’ or

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<sup>52</sup> See: <http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/news-and-comment/david-beckham-sir-alex-ferguson-made-me-shave-off-mohawk-hours-before-2000-charity-shield-10072409.html> and <http://www.express.co.uk/sport/football/560607/David-Beckham-Sir-Alex-Ferguson-shave-head-toilets-Wembley>

<sup>53</sup> See Owen Jarus: <http://www.livescience.com/45297-barbarians.html>

‘barbaric’ or ‘barbarity’ there would be less confusion. These are also signs that have to do with conquered peoples in history and this, is highly problematic. Bloch you will recall speaks of the utilization of “‘barbaric art’” by Expressionism. I may push the envelope of the history of ‘barbaric’ art all the way as it were, to speak of upper Paleolithic parietal art, the art of prehistoric man from forty to ten thousand years ago. As Michael Weber notes in his ‘Shamanism and Proto-consciousness’, after the discovery of the Cave of Altamira in eighteen seventy nine, nineteenth century scholars thought the art found there “to be fake” because such “artistic refinement was [not] possible for simian ‘primitives’” and such “aesthetic refinement amongst the paleolithic barbarity” was “inconceivable” (n.p.). Clearly the “paleolithic barbarity” were not only violent but, unbelievably creative and the Expressionists who used “barbaric art” as inspiration would have to agree.

The association of the signs ‘primitive’ and ‘barbarity’ by Weber brings me to my last point just here. There seems, as I have shown, to be no agreement between the various people quoted within the thesis as to what exactly ‘barbarity’ is, past or present. So let us turn to a popular new age epistemological source for help: Google. The first thing we see of one million eight hundred and thirty thousand possible references, is an uncited definition provided by Google, stating that ‘barbarity’ means,

1. extreme cruelty or brutality. ‘the barbarity displayed by the terrorists’[.]  
*synonyms:* brutality, brutalism, cruelty, bestiality, barbarism, barbarousness, savagery, viciousness, fierceness, ferocity, wickedness, nastiness, ruthlessness, remorselessness, mercilessness, villainy, murderousness, heinousness, nefariousness, monstrousness, baseness, vileness, inhumanity, blackness, fiendishness, black-heartedness, hellishness, ghastliness, horror[.] ‘the barbarity of slavery’. · atrocity, act of brutality, act of savagery, evil, crime, outrage, offence, abomination, obscenity, enormity, wrong[.] ‘the barbarities of the last war’[.]

Google will agree with what I have been pointing out above in that there is another, historical reference to the meaning of ‘barbarity’ and gives the definition as such:

2. absence of culture and civilization. ‘beyond the Empire lay barbarity’[.]

*synonyms*: heathendom, barbarianism, barbarism, barbarousness, primitiveness, wildness, philistinism, benightedness, unsophisticatedness, lack of civilization, *archaic* rudeness[.] ‘beyond the empire lay barbarity’[.]<sup>54</sup>

There is much to be discussed here. I would however like to close my discussion on the uses that this sign has been put to by various thinkers by saying only, that the signs ‘barbarity’ and ‘barbarian’ and ‘barbarism’ are very active ones, as the discussions within the thesis attest to.

‘Barbarity, barbarism, barbarian, barbarous’ belong to a ‘zero point floating kingdom’. Ferdinand de Saussure, with regards to ‘articulation,’ according to Roland Barthes, spoke of the “double phenomenon of signification and value” and gave as an example the (A, B, C) “value of each in relation to its neighbours” (*Elements* 56). So for instance (A)-‘barbarity’ and (B)-‘primitive’ and (C)-‘uncivilized’ come to have ‘value’ to one another. At the same time each has ‘signification’ (A-A’, B-B’, C-C’). Therefore, (A)-‘barbarity’ is the signifier of a signified (A’)-“‘terrorists’” for instance, and (B-B’)-‘primitive’ of another signified, and (C-C’)-‘uncivilized’ another signified, and so on. What, as Barthes points out, is important, is that to understand this is to understand Saussure’s “original conception of the production of meaning” (56) because to look only at the sign (A-A), that is signifier-to-signified, is to miss the fact that it is actually a ‘floating kingdom’ because it is unstable. (A)-‘barbarity’ does not only relate to (A)-“‘terrorist’” but also to (A)-“‘Absence of culture and civilization’” and (A)-“‘crime’” and on to an entire “production of meaning” as our Google search clearly proves. The meaning of (A-A) is in fact an ‘articulation’ of an entire system of values and beliefs and in the case of ‘barbarity’ or ‘barbarism’ for an instance, the ‘floating kingdom’ ‘universalizes’ the ‘zero point’ in the language from only a “Western” cultural perspective, as Duiker noted concerning violence.

‘Zero point’ is once more, a way of seeing and knowing the world in a projective and all-encompassing way, as if the values and beliefs and opinions and meanings attributed to something (San cave paintings for another example) were ‘universal’. The ‘universality’ generates at once a ‘zero point’ in signification (‘barbarity’) while at the same time relegating all potential oppositional ‘value’ to the *edges* of the language, and by default society, where it can then be managed (prisons/psychiatric hospitals/homeless shelters: ‘lumpen’). Lacan well understood this force of the ‘zero point’ as that which “structures the subject” (*Ecrits* 695). Let

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<sup>54</sup> For the Google definition of ‘barbarity,’ see: <https://www.google.co.za/#q=barbarity&spf=1494922804599>

me bring into view once more Lacan's graphic representation of what I understand to be Saussure's 'floating kingdom' as a 'zero point' of the language:

$$\frac{S(\text{signifier})}{s(\text{signified})} = s(\text{the statement}),$$

with  $S = (-1)$ , we find:  $s = \sqrt{-1}$

(649).

You will recall that Barthes understood the 'value' of (the statement =  $s$ ) in the graphic representation above as determined by the "repression of the signified" (*Elements* 49): the meaning of 'Barbarity' for example. The signifier ( $S$ ) is "global" (49) and 'barbarity' as a signifier comes to have a derogatory over historical meaning intimately tied, through 'value' to the dominant values and beliefs of a culture in society. The values and beliefs of a culture that not necessarily our own but have come to seem that way through 'naturalization' of the language (*Elements* 14). Each 'particular' individual thus misrecognizes the desire of the Other as their own. Lacan will therefore speak of the "fading" or "eclipse" of the 'I' by the signifier ( $S$ ) (691-94). 'I' (non-Western values and beliefs for example) becomes 'un-articulated' and 'un-valued' when there are no signifiers ( $-1$ ) for the individual to utilize:  $S = (-1)$  in the graphic representation. When the only signifiers ( $S$ ) available as a system of signification are those as 'zero point floating kingdoms' of the Western value and belief system we find 'barbarity' for example becoming:  $s = \sqrt{-1}$ . 'Barbarity' becomes 'simplified' by the 'zero point' of language and the implications are that the possibility for 'barbarity' to have 'value' in another system of signification are significantly reduced. In this way the consciousness of individuals are "eclipsed" by the 'universalization' tendency of the 'zero point' and often, like Tshepo in the *Quiet Violence* who is found "naked except for an old sheepskin seat cover . . . parading . . . in front of a busy butchery . . . saying and whispering Mam'lambo" (14), will find themselves in an institution, as Tshepo does: "The truth is I still don't know what happened. Things just got out of hand and I landed in a mental institution. It's hard to accept that. I feel angry with myself" (20). Fanon has discoursed at length in *The Wretched* concerning the consciousness of colonized peoples but it is in *Towards the African Revolution* where Fanon speaks of the management of those peoples who do not 'fit' and how "In the calm of this period of triumphant colonization, a constant and considerable stream of mental symptoms are direct sequels of this oppression" and what is more, "colonization, in its very essence, already appeared to be a great purveyor of psychiatric hospitals" (181-2).

I believe I've made my point regarding the 'zero point floating kingdom' in the conclusion with the example of the signs 'barbarity, barbarism, barbarous' but let us look briefly at another sign very much under contestation in this thesis. The second reference of one million eight hundred and thirty thousand on Google for 'barbarity' is from dictionary.com.<sup>55</sup> The first two meanings given by dictionary.com corroborate what Google provides as 'barbarity' being "brutal or inhuman conduct; cruelty" and "an act or instance of cruelty or inhumanity". But significantly, and this is very important, there is here a third meaning given for 'barbarity' as: "crudity of style, taste, expression, etc." 'The 'zero point floating kingdom' has now been expanded and although there are no direct examples given of what it is bringing into its ambit, it seems to my mind to be alluding to art and culture.

Literary realism has always been targeted as being overly concerned with "'low' subjects and immoral tendencies" and from the very beginning of the novel as a form has been involved in "bitter controversies" (Watt 11) because of this "taste". Shaftesbury when speaking of "taletellers" of the "barbarous" (*Characteristics* 153-57) states, as a point of 'value' the following: "But to amuse ourselves with such authors as neither know how to lie nor tell truth discovers a *taste* which, methinks, one should not be apt to envy" (66-67 my emphasis). Shaftesbury's scorn of this 'taste' is related to the purely factual (Watt's empiricist 'how' of literature) and the purely fictitious coming together in a work. In other words, what I have discoursed on as part of the 'authentic' realist's method as it has developed, would have been Shaftesbury's target.

In an avenue of elaboration more overtly to do with the thesis we might turn to Wikipedia to see what literary realism means. The introduction is as follows:

**Literary realism** is part of the realist art movement beginning with mid nineteenth-century French literature (Stendhal), and Russian literature (Alexander Pushkin) and extending to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Literary realism, in contrast to idealism, attempts to represent familiar things as they are. Realist authors chose to depict everyday and banal activities and experiences, instead of using a romanticized or similarly stylized presentation.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> For dictionary.com, see: <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/barbarity>

<sup>56</sup> For the entry on literary realism, see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary\\_realism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_realism)

Note the ‘value’ between “banality” (realism) and “crude” (barbarity). The Wikipedia entry on ‘literary realism’ only mention the following as having any contemporaneous relevance: “the conventions of the genre have continued into the 2000s, finding *expression* in such *television* shows as *Coronation Street* and *EastEnders*” (my emphasis). The rest has to do with the past, as when here in the introductory it cues this fact with “extending to late nineteenth and early twentieth century”. The periodization of the realist movement may be accurate but this is to occlude the fact that the realist novel as a method (a ‘way’) has something to do with the present of our realities. There seems then to be no relevance of literary realism to any contemporary artistic theorization and neither do any theorists (there are many examples of novelists of bygone days) appear except Ian Watt whose *Rise of the Novel* was published in nineteen fifty seven. There is also another cue in the introduction in that “Realist authors *chose* to depict everyday and *banal* activities . . .” (my emphasis). For all intents and purposes one would be led to believe from Wikipedia that ‘literary realism’ is done and dusted

There is again much that could come into my purview concerning the absence of any ‘articulated’ ‘authentic’ realism. I could treat the signification and ‘value’ (“banal” for instance) of the sign in much the same way as I have with ‘barbarity’ but my lens is much more focused just here and my point is this: what we are looking at with the Wikipedia entry on ‘literary’ realism is the workings once again of the ‘floating kingdom’ of the ‘zero point’ (A-A’). Specifically here, a version of what Walter Mignolo theorizes as the “epistemology of the zero point” where, “Every way of knowing and sensing (feeling) that do not conform to the epistemology and aesthesis of the zero point are cast behind in time . . .” (80). In this case, ‘literary realism’ is cast “in the order of” an historical artistic movement.

If we are to look at how it is ‘simplified’:  $s = \sqrt{-1}$ , by Wikipedia we see then again the “fading” or “eclipse” of ‘authentic’ literary realism (-1) by the ‘zero point’ of language which has ‘literary realism’ as a signifier (S) and the signified (s) = s (the statement) as most determinately in the following way: “Literary realism, in contrast to idealism, attempts to *represent* familiar things as they are” (emphasis is mine). ‘Representation’ (pseudo-realism) instead of ‘articulation’ (authentic realism) and the erasure of ~~idealism~~ with anything to do with literary realism, as the “Literary realism, in contrast to idealism” produces. But this is not true. Raymond Williams in his *Keywords* is very specific about the fact that the original Realist doctrine was “an assertion of the absolute and objective existence of universals” (257). As Williams continues, the “use may be said to have *faded*” (my emphasis) and that “realism in a more modern sense,” (“concrete” [empiricism]) “can be said to have overlain and supressed it”



but that “Our common distinction between *appearance* and reality goes back, fundamentally, to the early use – ‘the reality underlying appearances . . .’” (258). Literary realism may ‘represent’ (the ‘particular’) but ‘authentic’ literary realism ‘articulates’ (the ‘particular’) so as to make systems of meaning (‘universals’).

I find it deeply concerning when common and popular knowledge platforms of the ‘zero points’ of language such as Wikipedia and dictionary.com cast the unstable ‘floating kingdom’ that is the signification ‘literary realism’ into the past or into ‘value’ that will “fade” and “eclipse” what ‘authentic’ literary realism is able to ‘articulate’. Throughout the thesis I have tried to bring what was ‘un-articulated’ and ‘un-valued’ (-1) in Duiker’s works of art and extra-generic marginalia into view as his ‘I’ that we have seen emerge through his ‘lumpen commitment’ and in his non-Western values and beliefs. I have codified it as the ‘alter-native’ world outlook which is to give a sign, a ‘value,’ and an ‘articulation’ that as a ‘floating kingdom’ that “structures the subject” will associate with a system of signification against the ‘universalizing’ tendencies of the ‘zero point’ of language.

But it is only because Duiker’s ‘authentic’ literary realism is able “to penetrate the laws governing objective reality and to uncover the deeper, hidden, mediated, not immediately perceptible network of relationships that go to make up society” (*Aesthetics* 38) as Georg Lukács – one of the few champions of literary realism – so adequately defines literary realism, that this was possible. To reformulate the little sing-song for children living in our ‘barbarous’ times: sticks and stones can break my bones but ‘floating kingdoms’ will define me.

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*Addendum*

“We sit in silence, the way I like, and admire the view. The sun licks clouds, for a while it hides behind them.

I fantasise about taking a walk in Sea Point and think about what Mmbatho said about the whole colour thing. When you go out in some places in Cape Town no one really cares that you're black and that your mother sent you to a private school so that you could speak well. No one cares that you're white and that your father abuses his colleagues at work and calls them kaffirs at home. On the dance floor it doesn't matter which party you voted for in the last election or whether you know how many provinces make up the country. People only care that you can dance and that you look good. They care that you are wearing Soviet jeans with an expensive Gucci shirt and that you have a cute ass. They care that your girlfriend has a pierced tongue and that sometimes on a Saturday night she goes to bed with another woman and likes you to watch them. They want to see you wearing Diesel jeans with a retro shirt and Nike tackies. They want to see how creatively you can fuse mall shopping with flea market crawling and still remain stylish. Designer labels are the new Esperanto. Dolce e Gabbana kicks more ass than any bill of rights. In some clubs a person will chat you up because you know what drum & bass is and can dance to it while appearing sexy, not because you match the same race group like some arbitrary prerequisite. They want to hear you talking about what half a cap of acid does to you on a Saturday night after taking tequila or which is the best site to get into if you want to know more about Jamiroquai. They want to live out their *Trainspotting* odyssey of excess in a culture rapidly blurring the borders between the township and the northern suburbs. The people I know never forget that in essence the difference between kwaito and rave is down to a difference in beats per minute and that the margin is becoming narrower. It's not that it's fashionable to be seen going out with a person of different colour. For Mmbatho it seems to be about exploring another culture. Some people are just sick of the expected. Me Tarzan, you Jane has become monotonous. People want to make their own references about who they are and where they fit in or not. It's not enough to simply offer them certain variables, hoping that they'll fit in there somewhere. And Cape Town is not what it used to be. Foreigners have left their imprint on our culture.

Like every growing metropolis Cape Town aspires to be the next best thing. And why shouldn't it? It has a lot going for it. The burgeoning modelling agencies, the politicians who act like celebrities, the scandals, the crude flaunting of money – they all point to a city that wants to be New York, London, or Paris. People want to be seen eating croissants at a chic

coffee shop at the Table View, rollerblading in Clifton or going for aromatherapy in bohemian Observatory. People want to see you drinking Valpré while working out at the Health & Racquet, with a personal trainer fashionably at your disposal. You must drive an Audi A4 and watch that you eat if you're going to wear your Speedo. You should rather wear Ray Bans than some cheap flea market knock off so that when people see you they must have something that they can relate to past the obvious. Isn't this the fodder advertisers feed us? You must smoke Peter Stuyvesant cigarettes and live out the fantasy of the fun-filled adverts. You must wear a Swatch so that a swarthy-looking blond can have a pick-up line. So that colour becomes secondary to the person you present. They want to say ah you're cool and not ah you're black or white. You must be into drumming, support world debt relief and have your chart done. You must know what heita means, what magents are and how to shake hands the African way. You must know what a barmitzvah is, in which direction Mecca faces and who charros are. And which Thai foods go best with soya sauce. You must know all these things and more in a culture pushing to be hybrid and past gender and racial lines. You must aspire for the universality of CK One and still you must be willing to absorb more. Until all you can see on the dance floor are people packaged in a way that brings fire to your loins. Until the music becomes the only thing separating you from another person. And if you're lucky you get to go home with the girl. These are things that define the club culture in Cape Town, not racial politics. . . . Tshepo does his best to hide his sadness but I can see it spilling out from the corner of his eye and can hear it in his sigh." (Duiker 34-36)